

2008-Eckhart Tolle Oprah A New Earth Audiobook Podcast Chapter04

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 1:16:26)

CHAPTER FOUR ROLE-PLAYING THE MANY FACES OF THE EGO An ego that wants something from another, and what ego doesn't, will usually play some kind of role to get its needs met, be they material gain, a sense of power, superiority or specialness, or some kind of gratification, be it physical or psychological. Usually people are completely unaware of the roles they play. They are those roles.

Some roles are subtle, others are blatantly obvious except to the person playing it. Some roles are designed simply to get attention from others. The ego thrives on others' attention, which is after all a form of psychic energy.

The ego doesn't know that the source of all energy is within you, so it seeks it outside. It is not the formless attention which is presence the ego seeks, but attention in some form, such as recognition, praise, admiration, or just to be noticed in some way, to have its existence acknowledged. The shy person who is afraid of the attention of others is not free of ego, but has an ambivalent ego that both wants and fears attention from others.

The fear is that the attention may take the form of disapproval or criticism, that is to say, something that diminishes the sense of self rather than enhances it. So the shy person's fear of attention is greater than his or her need of attention. Shyness often goes with a self-concept that is predominantly negative, the belief of being inadequate.

Any conceptual sense of self, seeing myself as this or that, is ego, whether predominantly positive, I'm the greatest, or negative, I'm no good. Behind every positive self-concept is the hidden fear of not being good enough. Behind every negative self-concept is the hidden desire of being the greatest or better than others.

Behind the confident ego's feeling of and continuing need for superiority is the unconscious fear of inferiority. Conversely, the shy, inadequate ego that feels inferior has a strong hidden desire for superiority. Many people fluctuate between feelings of inferiority and superiority, depending on situations or the people they come into contact with.

All you need to know and observe in yourself is this. Whenever you feel superior or inferior to anyone, that's the ego in you, villain, victim, lover. Some egos, if they cannot get praise or admiration, will settle for other forms of attention and play roles to elicit them.

If they cannot get positive attention, they may seek negative attention instead, for example, by provoking a negative reaction in someone else. Some children already do

that, too. They misbehave to get attention.

The playing of negative roles becomes particularly pronounced whenever the ego is magnified by an active pain body, that is to say, emotional pain from the past that wants to renew itself through experiencing more pain. Some egos perpetrate crimes in their search for fame. They seek attention through notoriety and other people's condemnation.

Please tell me that I exist, that I'm not insignificant, they seem to say. Such pathological forms of ego are only more extreme versions of normal egos. A very common role is the one of victim, and the form of attention it seeks is sympathy or pity or others' interest in my problems, me and my story.

Seeing oneself as a victim is an element in many egoic patterns, such as complaining, being offended, outraged, and so on. Of course, once I'm identified with a story in which I assigned myself the role of victim, I don't want it to end, and so, as every therapist knows, the ego does not want an end to its problems, because they are part of its identity. If no one will listen to my sad story, I can tell it to myself in my head, over and over, and feel sorry for myself, and so have an identity as someone who is being treated unfairly by life or other people, fate or God.

It gives definition to myself image, makes me into someone, and that is all that matters to the ego. In the early stages of many so-called romantic relationships, role-playing is quite common in order to attract and keep whoever is perceived by the ego as the one who is going to make me happy, make me feel special, and fulfill all my needs. I'll play who you want me to be, and you'll play who I want you to be.

That's the unspoken and unconscious agreement. However, role-playing is hard work, and so those roles cannot be sustained indefinitely, especially once you start living together. When those roles slip, what do you see?

Unfortunately, in most cases, not yet the true essence of that being, but that which covers up the true essence. The raw ego divested of its roles, with its pain body, and its thwarted wanting, which now turns into anger, most likely directed at the spouse or partner, for having failed to remove the underlying fear and sense of lack that is an intrinsic part of the egoic sense of self. Falling in love is in most cases an intensification of egoic wanting and needing.

You become addicted to another person, or rather to your image of that person. It has nothing to do with true love which contains no wanting whatsoever. The Spanish language is the most honest in regard to conventional notions of love.

Te quiero means I want you as well as I love you. The other expression for I love you, te amo, which does not have this ambiguity, is rarely used, perhaps because true love is

just as rare. Letting go of self-definitions.

As tribal cultures developed into the ancient civilizations, certain functions began to be allotted to certain people. Ruler, priest or priestess, warrior, farmer, merchant, craftsman, labourer, and so on. A class system developed.

Your function, that in most cases you were born into, determined your identity, determined who you were in the eyes of others as well as in your own eyes. Your function became a role, but it wasn't recognized as a role. It was who you were or thought you were.

Only rare beings at the time, such as the Buddha or Jesus, saw the ultimate irrelevance of caste or social class, recognized it as identification with form, and saw that such identification with the conditioned and the temporal obscured the light of the unconditioned and eternal that shines in each human being. In our contemporary world, the social structures are less rigid, less clearly defined than they used to be. Although most people are, of course, still conditioned by their environment, they are no longer automatically assigned to function and with it an identity.

In fact, in the modern world, more and more people are confused as to where they fit in, what their purpose is, and even who they are. I usually congratulate people when they tell me, I don't know who I am anymore. Then they look perplexed and ask, are you saying it is a good thing to be confused?

I ask them to investigate. What does it mean to be confused? I don't know is not confusion.

Confusion is, I don't know but I should know, or I don't know but I need to know. Is it possible to let go of the belief that you should or need to know who you are? In other words, can you cease looking to conceptual definitions to give you a sense of self?

Can you cease looking to thought for an identity? When you let go of the belief that you should or need to know who you are, what happens to confusion? Suddenly it is gone.

When you fully accept that you don't know, you actually enter a state of peace and clarity that is closer to who you truly are than thought could ever be. Defining yourself through thought is limiting yourself. Pre-established roles.

Of course different people fulfill different functions in this world. It cannot be otherwise. As far as intellectual or physical abilities are concerned, knowledge, skills, talents and energy levels, human beings differ widely.

What really matters is not what function you fulfill in this world, but whether you identify with your function to such an extent that it takes you over and becomes a role that you play. When you play roles, you are unconscious. When you catch yourself playing a role,

that recognition creates a space between you and the role.

It is the beginning of freedom from the role. When you are completely identified with the role, you confuse a pattern of behavior with who you are, and you take yourself very seriously. You also automatically assign roles to others that correspond to yours.

For example, when you visit doctors who are totally identified with their role, to them you will not be a human being, but a patient or a case history. Although the social structures in the contemporary world are less rigid than in ancient cultures, there are still many pre-established functions or roles that people readily identify with and which thus become part of the ego. This causes human interactions to become inauthentic, dehumanized, alienating.

Those pre-established roles may give you a somewhat comforting sense of identity, but ultimately you lose yourself in them. The functions people have in hierarchical organizations such as the military, the church, a government institution or large corporation easily lend themselves to becoming role identities. Authentic human interactions become impossible when you lose yourself in a role.

Some pre-established roles we could call social archetypes. To mention just a few, the middle-class housewife, not as prevalent as it used to be but still widespread, the tough macho male, the female seductress, the non-conformist artist or performer, a person of culture, a role quite common in Europe, who displays a knowledge of literature, fine art and music in the same way as others might display an expensive dress or car. And then there's the universal role of adult.

When you play that role, you take yourself and life very seriously. Spontaneity, light-heartedness and joy are not part of that role. It originated on the west coast of the United States in the 1960s and then spread throughout the western world, came out of many young people's rejection of social archetypes, of roles, of pre-established patterns of behavior, as well as egoically based social and economic structures.

They refused to play the roles their parents and society wanted to impose on them. Significantly, it coincided with the horrors of the Vietnam War, in which more than 57,000 young Americans and three million Vietnamese died, and through which the insanity of the system and the underlying mindset was exposed for all to see. Whereas in the 1950s most Americans were still extremely conformist in thought and behavior, in the 1960s millions of people began to withdraw their identification with a collective conceptual identity, because the insanity of the collective was so obvious.

The hippie movement represented a loosening of the hitherto rigid egoic structures in the psyche of humanity. The movement itself degenerated and came to an end, but it left behind an opening, and not just in those who were part of the movement. This made it possible for ancient eastern western spirituality to move west and play an essential

part in the awakening of global consciousness.

TEMPORARY ROLES If you are awake enough, aware enough, to be able to observe how you interact with other people, you may detect subtle changes in your speech, attitude, and behavior depending on the person you are interacting with. At first it may be easier to observe this in others. Then you may also detect it in yourself.

The way in which you speak to the chairman of the company may be different in subtle ways from how you speak to the janitor. How you speak to a child may be different from how you speak to an adult. Why is that?

You are playing roles. You are not yourself, neither with the chairman nor with the janitor or the child. When you walk into a store to buy something, when you go to a restaurant, the bank, the post office, you may find yourself slipping into pre-established social roles.

You become a customer and speak and act as such. And you may be treated by the salesperson or waiter, who is also playing a role, as a customer. A range of conditioned patterns of behavior come into effect between two human beings that determine the nature of the interaction.

Instead of human beings, conceptual mental images are interacting with each other. The more identified people are with their respective roles, the more inauthentic the relationships become. You have a mental image not only of who the other person is, but also of who you are, especially in relation to the person you are interacting with.

So you are not relating with that person at all, but who you think you are is relating to who you think the other person is, and vice versa. The conceptual image your mind has made of yourself is relating to its own creation, which is the conceptual image it has made of the other person. The other person's mind has probably done the same.

So every egoic interaction between two people is in reality the interaction between four conceptual mind-made identities which are ultimately fictions. It is therefore not surprising there is so much conflict in relationships. There is no true relationship.

The Monk with Sweaty Palms Kazan, a Zen teacher and monk, was to officiate at a funeral of a famous nobleman. As he stood there waiting for the governor of the province and other lords and ladies to arrive, he noticed that the palms of his hands were sweaty. The next day he called his disciples together and confessed he was not yet ready to be a true teacher.

He explained to them that he still lacked the sameness of bearing before all human beings, whether beggar or king. He was still unable to look through social roles and conceptual identities and see the sameness of being in every human. He then left and became the pupil of another master.

He returned to his former disciples eight years later, enlightened. Happiness as a Role vs. True Happiness How are you?

Just great, couldn't be better. True or false? In many cases, happiness is a role people play, and behind the smiling facade there is a great deal of pain.

Depression, breakdowns and overreactions are common when unhappiness is covered up behind a smiling exterior and brilliant white teeth, when there is denial, sometimes even to oneself, that there is much unhappiness. Just fine is a role the ego plays more commonly in America than in certain other countries where being and looking miserable is almost the norm and therefore more socially acceptable. It is probably an exaggeration, but I am told that in the capital of one Nordic country you run the risk of being arrested for drunken behaviour if you smile at strangers in the street.

If there is unhappiness in you, first you need to acknowledge that it is there. But don't say, I am unhappy. Unhappiness has nothing to do with who you are.

Say, there is unhappiness in me. Then investigate it. The situation you find yourself in may have something to do with it.

Action may be required to change the situation or remove yourself from it. If there is nothing you can do, face what is and say, well, right now, this is how it is. I can either accept it or make myself miserable.

It is never the situation but your thoughts about it. Be aware of the thoughts you are thinking. Separate them from the situation, which is always neutral, which always is as it is.

There is the situation or the fact, and here are my thoughts about it. Instead of making up stories, stay with the facts. For example, I am ruined is a story.

It limits you and prevents you from taking effective action. I have 50 cents left in my bank account is a fact. Facing facts is always empowering.

Be aware that what you think, to a large extent, creates the emotions that you feel. See the link between your thinking and your emotions. Rather than being your thoughts and emotions, be the awareness behind them.

Don't seek happiness. If you seek it, you won't find it, because seeking is the antithesis of happiness. Happiness is ever elusive, but freedom from unhappiness is attainable now, by facing what is rather than making up stories about it.

Unhappiness covers up your natural state of well-being and inner peace, the source of true happiness. Parenthood. Role or function.

Many adults play roles when they speak to young children. They use silly words and

sounds. They talk down to the child.

They don't treat the child as an equal. The fact that you temporarily know more or that you are bigger does not mean the child is not your equal. The majority of adults, at some point in their lives, find themselves being a parent, one of the most universal roles.

The all-important question is, are you able to fulfil the function of being a parent and fulfil it well, without identifying with that function, that is, without it becoming a role? Part of the necessary function of being a parent is looking after the needs of the child, preventing the child from getting into danger, and at times telling the child what to do and not to do. When being a parent becomes an identity, however, when your sense of self is entirely or largely derived from it, the function easily becomes overemphasised, exaggerated, and takes you over.

Giving children what they need becomes excessive and turns into spoiling. Preventing them from getting into danger becomes overprotectiveness and interferes with their need to explore the world and try things out for themselves. Telling children what to do or not to do becomes controlling, overbearing.

What is more, the role-playing identity remains in place long after the need for those particular functions has passed. Parents then cannot let go of being a parent even when the child grows into an adult. They can't let go of the need to be needed by their child.

Even when the adult child is forty years old, parents can't let go of the notion, I know what's best for you. The role of parent is still being played compulsively, and so there's no authentic relationship. Parents define themselves by that role and are unconsciously afraid of loss of identity when they cease being parents.

If their desire to control or influence the action of their adult child is thwarted, as it usually is, they will start to criticise or show their disapproval, or try to make the child feel guilty, all in an unconscious attempt to preserve their role, their identity. On the surface it looks as if they were concerned about their child, and they themselves believe it. But they are only really concerned about preserving their role identity.

All egoic motivations are self-enhancement and self-interest, sometimes cleverly disguised even from the person in whom the ego operates. A mother or father who identifies with the parental role may also try to become more complete through their children. The ego's need to manipulate others into filling the sense of lack it continuously feels is then directed towards them.

If the mostly unconscious assumptions and motivations behind the parent's compulsion to manipulate their children were made conscious and voiced, they would probably include some or all of the following. I want you to achieve what I never achieved. I want you to be somebody in the eyes of the world, so that I too can be somebody through

you.

Don't disappoint me. I sacrificed so much for you. My disapproval of you is intended to make you feel so guilty and uncomfortable that you finally conform to my wishes.

And it goes without saying that I know what's best for you. I love you and I will continue to love you if you do what I know is right for you. If the motivation is conscious, you immediately see how absurd they are.

The ego that lies behind them becomes visible, as does its dysfunction. Some parents that I spoke to suddenly realized, my God, is this what I've been doing? Once you see what you're doing or have been doing, you also see its futility.

And that unconscious pattern then comes to an end by itself. Awareness is the greatest agent for change. If your parents are doing this to you, do not tell them they are unconscious and in the grip of the ego.

That will likely make them even more unconscious, because the ego will take up a defensive position. It is enough for you to recognize that it is the ego in them, that it is not who they are. Egoic patterns, even long-standing ones, sometimes dissolve almost miraculously when you don't oppose them internally.

Opposition only gives them renewed strength. But even if they don't, you can then accept your parents' behavior with compassion, without needing to react to it, that is to say, without personalizing it. Be aware also of your own unconscious assumptions or expectations that lie behind your old habitual reactions to them.

My parents should approve of what I do. They should understand me and accept me for who I am. Really?

Why should they? The fact is they don't, because they can't. Their evolving consciousness hasn't made the quantum leap to the level of awareness yet.

They are not yet able to identify from their role. Yes, but I can't feel happy and comfortable with who I am unless I have their approval and understanding. Really?

What difference does their approval or disapproval truly make to who you are? All such unexamined assumptions cause a great deal of negative emotion, much unnecessary unhappiness. Be alert.

Are some of the thoughts that go through your mind the internalized voice of your father or mother, saying perhaps something like, you are not good enough, you will never amount to anything, or some other judgment or mental position? If there's awareness in you, you will be able to recognize that voice in your head for what it is, an old thought conditioned by the past. If there's awareness in you, you no longer need to believe in

every thought you think.

It's an old thought, no more. Awareness means presence, and only presence can dissolve the unconscious past in you. If you think you are so enlightened, Ram Dass said, go and spend a week with your parents.

That is good advice. The relationship with your parents is not only the primordial relationship that sets the tone for all subsequent relationships. It is also a good test for your degree of presence.

The more shared past there is in a relationship, the more present you need to be, otherwise you will be forced to relive the past again and again. Conscious suffering. If you have young children, give them help, guidance, and protection to the best of your ability, but even more important, give them space.

Space to be. They come into this world through you, but they are not yours. The belief, I know what's best for you, may be true when they are very young, but the older they get, the less true it becomes.

The more expectations you have of how their life should unfold, the more you are in your mind instead of being present for them. Eventually, they will make mistakes and they will experience some form of suffering, as all humans do. In fact, they may be mistakes only from your perspective.

What to you is a mistake may be exactly what your children need to do or experience. Give them as much help and guidance as you can, but realize that you may also at times have to allow them to make mistakes, especially as they begin to reach adulthood. At times, you may also have to allow them to suffer.

Suffering may come to them out of the blue, or it may come as the consequence of their own mistakes. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could spare them from all suffering? No, it wouldn't.

They would not evolve as human beings and would remain shallow, identified with the external form of things. Suffering drives you deeper. The paradox is that suffering is caused by identification with form and erodes identification with form.

A lot of it is caused by the ego, although eventually suffering destroys the ego. But not until you suffer consciously. Humanity is destined to go beyond suffering, but not in the way the ego thinks.

One of the ego's many erroneous assumptions, one of its many deluded thoughts is, I should not have to suffer. Sometimes a thought gets transferred to someone close to you. My child should not have to suffer.

That thought itself lies at the root of suffering. Suffering has a noble purpose, the evolution of consciousness and the burning up of the ego. The man on the cross is an archetypal image.

He is every man and every woman. As long as you resist suffering, it is a slow process because the resistance creates more ego to burn up. When you accept suffering, however, there is an acceleration of that process which is brought about by the fact that you suffer consciously.

You can accept suffering for yourself or you can accept it for someone else, such as your child or parent. In the midst of conscious suffering, there is already the transmutation. The fire of suffering becomes the light of consciousness.

The ego says, I shouldn't have to suffer, and that thought makes you suffer so much more. It is a distortion of the truth which is always paradoxical. The truth is that you need to say yes to suffering before you can transcend it.

Many children harbour hidden anger and resentment towards their parents, and often the cause is inauthenticity in the relationship. The child has a deep longing for the parent to be there as a human being, not as a role, no matter how conscientiously that role is being played. You may be doing all the right things and the best you can for your child, but even doing the best you can is not enough.

In fact, doing is never enough if you neglect being. The ego knows nothing of being but believes you will eventually be saved by doing. If you are in the grip of the ego, you believe that by doing more and more you will eventually accumulate enough doings to make yourself feel complete at some point in the future.

You won't. You will only lose yourself in doing. The entire civilization is losing itself in doing that is not rooted in being and thus becomes futile.

How do you bring being into the life of a busy family, into the relationship with your child? The key is to give your child attention. There are two kinds of attention.

One we might call form-based attention. The other is formless attention. Form-based attention is always connected in some way with doing or evaluating.

Have you done your homework? Eat your dinner, tidy up your room, brush your teeth, do this, stop doing that, hurry up, get ready. What's the next thing we have to do?

This question pretty much summarizes what family life is like in many homes. Form-based attention is of course necessary and has its place. But if that's all there is in the relationship with your child, then the most vital dimension is missing and being becomes completely obscured by doing, by the chaos of the world, as Jesus puts it.

Formless attention is inseparable from the dimension of being. How does it work? As you look at, listen to, touch or help your child with this or that, you are alert, still, completely present, not wanting anything other than that moment as it is.

In this way you make room for being. In that moment, if you are present, you are not a father or mother. You are the alertness, the stillness, the presence that is listening, looking, touching, even speaking.

You are the being behind the doing, recognizing your child. You are a human being. What does that mean?

Mastery of life is not a question of control, but of finding a balance between human and being. Mother, father, husband, wife, young, old, the roles you play, the functions you fulfill, whatever you do, all that belongs to the human dimension. It has its place and needs to be honored.

But in itself it is not enough for a fulfilled, truly meaningful relationship or life. Human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve. Then there is being.

It is found in the still, alert presence of consciousness itself, the consciousness that you are. Human is form, being is formless. Human and being are not separate, but interwoven.

In the human dimension, you are unquestionably superior to your child. You are bigger, stronger, know more, can do more. If that dimension is all you know, you will feel superior to your child, if only unconsciously.

And you will make your child feel inferior, if only unconsciously. There is no equality between you and your child because there is only form in your relationship. And in form you are, of course, not equal.

You may love your child, but your love will be human only, that is to say, conditional, possessive, intermittent. Only beyond form, in being, are you equal. And only when you find the formless dimension in yourself can there be true love in that relationship.

The presence that you are, the timeless I am, recognizes itself in another. And the other, the child in this case, feels loved, that is to say, recognized. To love is to recognize yourself in another.

The other's otherness then stands revealed as an illusion pertaining to the purely human realm, the realm of form. The longing for love that is in every child is the longing to be recognized not on the level of form, but on the level of being. If parents honor only the human dimension of the child, but neglect being, the child will sense that the relationship is unfulfilled, that something absolutely vital is missing, and there will be a

buildup of pain in the child and sometimes unconscious resentment towards the parents.

Why don't you recognize me? This is what the pain or resentment seems to be saying. You, that recognition draws the dimension of being more fully into this world through both of you.

That is the love that redeems the world. I have been speaking of this with specific reference to the relationship with your child, but it equally applies, of course, to all relationships. It has been said, God is love, but that is not absolutely correct.

God is the one life in and beyond the countless forms of life. Love implies duality, lover and beloved, subject and object. So love is the recognition of oneness in the world of duality.

This is the birth of God into the world of form. Love makes the world less worldly, less dense, more transparent to the divine dimension, the light of consciousness itself, giving up role playing. To do whatever is required of you in any situation without it becoming a role that you identify with is an essential lesson in the art of living that each one of us is here to learn.

You become most powerful in whatever you do if the action is performed for its own sake rather than as a means to protect, enhance or conform to your role identity. Every role is a fictitious sense of self, and through it everything becomes personalized and thus corrupted and distorted by the mind-made little me and whatever role it happens to be playing. Most of the people who are in positions of power in this world, such as politicians, TV personalities, business as well as religious leaders, are completely identified with their role, with a few notable exceptions.

They may be considered VIPs, but they are no more than unconscious players in the egoic game, a game that looks so important yet is ultimately devoid of true purpose. It is, in the words of Shakespeare, a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Amazingly, Shakespeare arrived at this conclusion without having the benefit of television.

If the egoic earth drama has any purpose at all, it is an indirect one. It creates more and more suffering on the planet, and suffering, although largely ego-created, is in the end also ego-destructive. It is the fire in which the ego burns itself up.

In a world of role-playing personalities, those few people who don't project a mind-made image—and there are some, even on TV, in the media and the business world—but function from a deeper core of their being, those who do not attempt to appear more than they are but are simply themselves, stand out as remarkable and are the only ones who truly make a difference in this world. They are the bringers of the new consciousness. Whatever they do becomes empowered because it is in alignment with

the purpose of the whole.

Their influence, however, goes far beyond what they do, far beyond their function. Their mere presence—simple, natural, unassuming—has a transformational effect on whoever they come into contact with. When you don't play roles, it means there is no self, ego, in what you do.

There is no secondary agenda, protection or strengthening of yourself. As a result, your actions have far greater power. You are totally focused on the situation, you become one with it.

You don't try to be anybody in particular. You are most powerful, most effective when you are completely yourself. But don't try to be yourself.

That's another role. It's called natural, spontaneous me. As soon as you are trying to be this or that, you are playing a role.

Just be yourself is good advice, but it can also be misleading. The mind will come in and say, let's see, how can I be myself? Then the mind will develop some kind of strategy.

How to be myself? Another role. How can I be myself is in fact the wrong question.

It implies you have to do something to be yourself. But how doesn't apply here, because you are yourself already. Just stop adding unnecessary baggage to who you already are.

But I don't know who I am. I don't know what it means to be myself. If you can be absolutely comfortable with not knowing who you are, then what's left is who you are, the being behind the human, a field of pure potentiality rather than something that is already defined.

Give up defining yourself, to yourself or to others. You won't die. You will come to life.

And don't be concerned with how others define you. When they define you, they are limiting themselves, so it's their problem. Whenever you interact with people, don't be there primarily as a function or role, but as a field of conscious presence.

Why does the ego play roles? Because of one unexamined assumption, one fundamental error, one unconscious thought. That thought is, I am not enough.

Other unconscious thoughts follow. I need to play a role in order to get what I need to be fully myself. I need to get more so that I can be more.

But you cannot be more than you are because underneath your physical and psychological form, you are one with life itself, one with being. In form, you are and will always be inferior to some, superior to others. In essence, you are neither inferior nor superior to anyone.

True self-esteem and true humility arise out of that realization. In the eyes of the ego, self-esteem and humility are contradictory. In truth, they are one and the same.

In a wider sense of the word, the ego itself is pathological, no matter what form it takes. When we look at the ancient Greek root of the word pathological, we discover just how appropriate that term is when applied to the ego. Although the word is normally used to describe a condition of disease, it is derived from pathos, which means suffering.

This is of course exactly what the Buddha already discovered 2,600 years ago as a characteristic of the human condition. A person in the grip of ego, however, does not recognize suffering as suffering, but will look upon it as the only appropriate response in any given situation. The ego in its blindness is incapable of seeing the suffering it inflicts on itself and on others.

Unhappiness is an ego-created mental-emotional disease that has reached epidemic proportions. It is the inner equivalent of the environmental pollution of our planet. Negative states such as anger, anxiety, hatred, resentment, discontent, envy, jealousy, and so on, are not recognized as negative, but as totally justified, and are further misperceived, not as self-created, but as caused by someone else or some external factor.

I am holding you responsible for my pain. This is what by implication the ego is saying. The ego cannot distinguish between a situation and its interpretation of and reaction to that situation.

You might say, what a dreadful day, without realizing that the cold, the wind, and the rain, or whatever condition you react to, are not dreadful. They are as they are. What is dreadful is your reaction, your inner resistance to it, and the emotion that is created by that resistance.

In Shakespeare's words, there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. What is more, suffering or negativity is often misperceived by the ego as pleasure, because up to a point the ego strengthens itself through it. For example, anger or resentment strengthen the ego enormously by increasing the sense of separateness, emphasizing the otherness of others, and creating a seemingly unassailable fortress-like mental position of rightness.

If you were able to observe the physiological changes that take place inside your body when possessed by such negative states, how they adversely affect the functioning of the heart the digestive and immune systems and countless other bodily functions, it would become abundantly clear that such states are indeed pathological, are forms of suffering and not pleasure. Whenever you are in a negative state, there's something in you that wants the negativity, that perceives it as pleasurable, or that believes it will get you what you want. Otherwise, who would want to hang on to negativity, make

themselves and others miserable, and create disease in the body?

So whenever there's negativity in you, if you can be aware at that moment that there's something in you that takes pleasure in it or believes it has a useful purpose, you're becoming aware of the ego directly. The moment this happens, your identity has shifted from ego to awareness. This means the ego is shrinking and awareness is growing.

If in the midst of negativity you're able to realize, at this moment I'm creating suffering for myself, it will be enough to raise you above the limitations of conditioned egoic states and reactions. It will open up infinite possibilities which come to you when there's awareness. Other, vastly more intelligent ways of dealing with any situation.

You will be free to let go of your unhappiness the moment you recognize it as unintelligent. Negativity is not intelligent. It is always of the ego.

The ego may be clever, but it is not intelligent. Cleverness pursues its own little aims. Intelligence sees the larger whole in which all things are connected.

Cleverness is motivated by self-interest, and it is extremely short-sighted. Most politicians and business people are clever. Very few are intelligent.

Whatever is attained through cleverness is short-lived and always turns out to be eventually self-defeating. Cleverness divides. Intelligence includes.

The background unhappiness. The ego creates separation, and separation creates suffering. The ego is therefore clearly pathological.

Apart from the obvious ones such as anger, hatred, and so on, there are other more subtle forms of negativity that are so common they are usually not recognized as such. For example, impatience, irritation, nervousness, and being fed up. They constitute the background unhappiness that is many people's predominant inner state.

You need to be extremely alert and absolutely present to be able to detect them. Whenever you do, it is a moment of awakening, of disidentification from the mind, that is easily overlooked precisely because it is so common, so normal. You may be familiar with it.

Do you often experience a feeling of discontent that could best be described as a kind of background resentment? It may be either specific or nonspecific. Many people spend a large part of their lives in that state.

They are so identified with it that they cannot stand back and see it. Underlying that feeling are certain unconsciously held beliefs, that is to say, thoughts. You think these thoughts in the same way that you dream your dreams when you are asleep.

In other words, you don't know you are thinking those thoughts, just as the dreamer

doesn't know his dreaming. Here are some of the most common unconscious thoughts that feed the feeling of discontent or background resentment. I have stripped away the content from those thoughts so that the bare structure remains.

They become more clearly visible that way. Whenever there is unhappiness in the background of your life, or even in the foreground, you can see which of these thoughts applies and fill in your own content according to your personal situation. ¶ There is something that needs to happen in my life before I can be at peace, happy, fulfilled, and so on.

And I resent that it hasn't happened yet. Maybe my resentment will finally make it happen. Something happened in the past that should not have happened, and I resent that.

If that hadn't happened I would be at peace now. Something is happening now that should not be happening, and it is preventing me from being at peace now. Often the unconscious beliefs are directed towards a person, and so happening becomes doing.

You should do this or that so that I can be at peace. And I resent that you haven't done it yet. Maybe my resentment will make you do it.

Something you or I did, said, or failed to do in the past is preventing me from being at peace now. What you are doing or failing to do now is preventing me from being at peace. The Secret of Happiness ¶ All of the above are assumptions, unexamined thoughts that are confused with reality.

They are stories the ego creates to convince you that you cannot be at peace now or cannot be fully yourself now. Being at peace and being who you are, that is, being yourself, are one. The ego says, maybe at some point in the future I can be at peace, if this, that, or the other happens, or I obtain this or become that.

Or it says, I can never be at peace because of something that happened in the past. Listen to people's stories, and they could all be entitled, Why I Cannot Be at Peace Now. The ego doesn't know that your only opportunity for being at peace is now.

Or maybe it does know, and it is afraid that you may find this out. Peace, after all, is the end of the ego. How to be at peace now?

By making peace with the present moment. The present moment is the field on which the game of life happens. It cannot happen anywhere else.

Once you have made peace with the present moment, see what happens, what you can do or choose to do, or rather what life does through you. There are three words that convey the secret of the art of living, the secret of all success and happiness. One with life.

Being one with life is being one with now. You then realize that you don't live your life, but life lives you. Life is the dancer, and you are the dance.

The ego loves its resentment of reality. What is reality? Whatever is.

Buddha called it tatata, the suchness of life, which is no more than the suchness of this moment. Opposition towards that suchness is one of the main features of the ego. It creates the negativity that the ego thrives on, the unhappiness that it loves.

In this way, you make yourself and others suffer and don't even know that you are doing it, don't know that you are creating hell on earth. To create suffering without recognizing it, this is the essence of unconscious living, this is being totally in the grip of the ego. The extent of the ego's inability to recognize itself and see what it is doing is staggering and unbelievable.

It will do exactly what it condemns others for and not see it. When it is pointed out, it will use angry denial, clever arguments, and self-justifications to distort the facts. People do it, corporations do it, governments do it.

When all else fails, the ego will resort to shouting or even to physical violence. Send in the marines. We can now understand the deep wisdom in Jesus' words on the cross.

Forgive them, for they know not what they do. To the human condition for thousands of years, you have to start with yourself and take responsibility for your inner state at any given moment. That means now.

Ask yourself, is there negativity in me at this moment? Then become alert, attentive to your thoughts as well as your emotions. Watch out for the low-level unhappiness in whatever form that I mentioned earlier, such as discontent, nervousness, being fed up, and so on.

Watch out for thoughts that appear to justify or explain this unhappiness, but in reality cause it. The moment you become aware of a negative state within yourself, it does not mean you have failed. It means you have succeeded.

Until that awareness happens, there is identification with inner states, and such identification is ego. With awareness comes disidentification from thoughts, emotions, and reactions. This is not to be confused with denial.

The thoughts, emotions, or reactions are recognized, and in the moment of recognizing, disidentification happens automatically. Your sense of self, of who you are, then undergoes a shift. Before you were the thoughts, emotions, and reactions.

Now you are the awareness, the conscious presence that witnesses those states. One day I will be free of the ego. Who is talking?

The ego. To become free of the ego is not really a big job, but a very small one. All you need to do is be aware of your thoughts and emotions, as they happen.

This is not really a doing, but an alert seeing. In that sense, it is true that there's nothing you can do to become free of the ego. When that shift happens, which is a shift from thinking to awareness, an intelligence far greater than the ego's cleverness begins to operate in your life.

Emotions and even thoughts become depersonalized through awareness. Their impersonal nature is recognized. There is no longer a self in them.

They are just human emotions, human thoughts. Your entire personal history, which is ultimately no more than a story, a bundle of thoughts and emotions, becomes of secondary importance and no longer occupies the forefront of your consciousness. It no longer forms the basis for your sense of identity.

You are the light of presence, the awareness that is prior to and deeper than any thoughts and emotions, pathological forms of ego. As we have seen, the ego is in its essential nature pathological, if we use the word in its wider sense to denote dysfunction and suffering. Many mental disorders consist of the same egoic traits that operate in a normal person, except that they have become so pronounced that their pathological nature is now obvious to anyone except the sufferer.

For example, many normal people tell certain kinds of lies from time to time in order to appear more important, more special, and to enhance their image in the others' mind, who they know, what their achievements, abilities, and possessions are, and whatever else the ego uses to identify with. Some people, however, driven by the ego's feeling of insufficiency and its need to have or be more, lie habitually and compulsively. Most of what they tell you about themselves, their story, is a complete fantasy, a fictitious edifice the ego has designed for itself to feel bigger, more special.

Their grandiose and inflated self-image can sometimes fool others, but usually not for long. It is then quickly recognized by most people as a complete fiction. The mental illness that is called paranoid schizophrenia, or paranoia for short, is essentially an exaggerated form of ego.

It usually consists of a fictitious story the mind has invented to make sense of a persistent underlying feeling of fear. The main element of the story is the belief that certain people, sometimes large numbers or almost everyone, are plotting against me or are conspiring to control or kill me. The story often has an inner consistency and logic, so that it sometimes fools others into believing it too.

Or entire nations have paranoid belief systems at their very basis. The ego's fear and distrust of other people, its tendency to emphasize the otherness of others by focusing

on their perceived faults and make those faults into their identity, is taken a little further and makes others into inhuman monsters. The ego needs others, but its dilemma is that deep down it hates and fears them.

Jean-Paul Sartre's statement, "Hell is other people," is the voice of the ego. The person suffering from paranoia experiences that hell most acutely, but everyone in whom the egoic patterns still operate will feel it to some degree. The stronger the ego in you, the more likely it is that in your perception other people are the main source of problems in your life.

It is also more than likely that you will make life difficult for others. But, of course, you won't be able to see that. It is always others who seem to be doing it to you.

The mental illness we call paranoia also manifests another symptom that is an element of every ego, although in paranoia it takes on a more extreme form. The more the sufferer sees himself persecuted, spied on, or threatened by others, the more pronounced becomes his sense of being the center of the universe around whom everything revolves, and the more special and important he feels as the imagined focal point of so many people's attention. His sense of being a victim, of being wronged by so many people, makes him feel very special.

In the story that forms the basis of his delusional system, he often assigns to himself the role of both victim and potential hero who is going to save the world or defeat the forces of evil. The collective ego of tribes, nations, and religious organizations also frequently contains a strong element of paranoia. Us against the evil others.

It is the cause of much human suffering. The Spanish Inquisition, the persecution and burning of heretics and witches, the relations between nations leading up to the First and Second World War, communism throughout its history, the Cold War, McCarthyism in America in the fifties, prolonged violent conflict in the Middle East, are all painful episodes in human history dominated by extreme collective paranoia. The more unconscious individuals, groups, or nations are, the more likely it is that egoic pathology will assume the form of physical violence.

Violence is a primitive but still very widespread way in which the ego attempts to assert itself, to prove itself right and another wrong. With very unconscious people, arguments can easily lead to physical violence. What is an argument?

Two or more people express their opinions, and those opinions differ. Each person is so identified with the thoughts that make up their opinion, that those thoughts harden into mental positions which are invested with a sense of self. In other words, identity and thought merge.

Once this has happened, when I defend my opinions, thoughts, I feel and act as if I were

defending my very self. Unconsciously, I feel and act as if I were fighting for survival, and so my emotions will reflect this unconscious belief. They become turbulent.

I'm upset, angry, defensive, or aggressive. I need to win at all costs lest I become annihilated. That's the illusion.

The ego doesn't know that mind and mental positions have nothing to do with who you are, because the ego is the unobserved mind itself. In Zen they say, don't seek the truth, just cease to cherish opinions. What does that mean?

Let go of identification with your mind. Who you are beyond the mind then emerges by itself. End of Disc 3 Without Ego Most people have moments when they are free of ego.

Those who are exceptionally good at what they do may be completely or largely free of ego while performing their work. They may not know it, but their work has become a spiritual practice. Most of them are present while they do their work and fall back into relative unconsciousness in their private life.

This means their state of presence is for the time being confined to one area of their life. I have met teachers, artists, nurses, doctors, scientists, social workers, waiters, hairdressers, business owners, and salespeople who perform their work admirably without any self-seeking, fully responding to whatever the moment requires of them. They are one with what they do, one with the now, one with the people or the task they serve.

The influence such people have upon others goes far beyond the function they perform. They bring about a lessening of the ego in everyone who comes into contact with them. Even people with heavy ego sometimes begin to relax, let down their guard, and stop playing their roles when they interact with them.

It comes as no surprise that those people who work without ego are extraordinarily successful at what they do. Anybody who is one with what he or she does is building the new earth. I have also met many others who may be technically good at what they do, but whose ego constantly sabotages their work.

Only part of their attention is on the work they perform. The other part is on themselves. Their ego demands personal recognition and wastes energy in resentment if it doesn't get enough.

And it's never enough. Is someone else getting more recognition than me? Or their main focus of attention is profit or power, and their work is no more than a means to that end.

When work is no more than a means to an end, it cannot be of high quality. When obstacles or difficulties arise in their work, when things don't go according to expectation, when other people or circumstances are not helpful or cooperative, instead

of immediately becoming one with the new situation and responding to the requirements of the present moment, they react against the situation and so separate themselves from it. There's a me that feels personally offended or resentful, and a huge amount of energy is burned up in useless protest or anger, energy that could be used for solving the situation if it were not being misused by the ego.

What is more, this anti-energy creates new obstacles, new opposition. Many people are truly their own worst enemy. People unknowingly sabotage their own work when they withhold help or information from others or try to undermine them, lest they become more successful or get more credit than me.

Cooperation is alien to the ego, except when there's a secondary motive. The ego doesn't know that the more you include others, the more smoothly things flow and the more easily things come to you. When you give little or no help to others or put obstacles in their path, the universe, in the form of people and circumstances, gives little or no help to you because you've cut yourself off from the whole.

The ego's unconscious core feeling of not enough causes it to react to someone else's success as if that success had taken something away from me. It doesn't know that your resentment of another person's success curtails your own chances of success. In order to attract success, you need to welcome it wherever you see it.

The Ego in Illness An illness can either strengthen or weaken the ego. If you complain, feel self-pity or resent being ill, your ego becomes stronger. It also becomes stronger if you make the illness part of your conceptual identity.

I am a sufferer of such and such a disease. Ah, so now we know who you are. Some people, on the other hand, who in normal life have a big ego, suddenly become gentle and kind and much nicer people when they are ill.

They may gain insights they may never have had in their normal life. They may access their inner knowing and contentment and speak words of wisdom. Then, when they get better, energy returns and so does the ego.

When you are ill, your energy level is quite low and the intelligence of the organism may take over and use the remaining energy for the healing of the body. And so there's not enough left for the mind, that is to say, egoic thinking and emotion. The ego burns up considerable amounts of energy.

In some cases, however, the ego retains the little energy that remains and uses it for its own purposes. Needless to say, those people who experience a strengthening of the ego in illness take much longer to recover. Some never do, and so the illness becomes chronic and a permanent part of their false sense of self.

How hard it is to live with yourself. One of the ways in which the ego attempts to escape

the unsatisfactoriness of personal selfhood is to enlarge and strengthen its sense of self by identifying with a group, a nation, political party, corporation, institution, sect, club, gang, football team. In some cases, the personal ego seems to dissolve completely as someone dedicates his or her life to working selflessly for the greater good of the collective without demanding personal rewards, recognition or aggrandizement.

What a relief to be freed of the dreadful burden of personal self. The members of the collective feel happy and fulfilled, no matter how hard they work, how many sacrifices they make. They appear to have gone beyond ego.

The question is, have they truly become free, or has the ego simply shifted from the personal to the collective? A collective ego manifests the same characteristics as the personal ego, such as the need for conflict and enemies, the need for more, the need to be right against others who are wrong, and so on. Sooner or later, the collective will come into conflict with other collectives, because it unconsciously seeks conflict and it needs opposition to define its boundary and thus its identity.

Its members will then experience the suffering that inevitably comes in the wake of any ego-motivated action. At that point, they may wake up and realize that their collective has a strong element of insanity. It can be painful at first to suddenly wake up and realize that the collective you had identified with and worked for is actually insane.

Some people at that point become cynical or bitter and henceforth deny all values, all worth. This means that they quickly adopted another belief system when the previous one was recognized as illusory and therefore collapsed. They didn't face the death of their ego, but ran away and reincarnated into a new one.

A collective ego is usually more unconscious than the individuals that make up that ego. For example, crowds, which are temporary collective egoic entities, are capable of committing atrocities that the individual away from the crowd would not be. Nations not infrequently engage in behavior that would be immediately recognizable as psychopathic in an individual.

As the new consciousness emerges, some people will feel called upon to form groups that reflect the enlightened consciousness. These groups will not be collective egos. The individuals who make up these groups will have no need to define their identity through them.

They no longer look to any form to define who they are. Even if the members that make up those groups are not totally free of ego yet, there will be enough awareness in them to recognize the ego in themselves or in others as soon as it appears. However, constant alertness is required, since the ego will try to take over and reassert itself in any way it can.

Dissolving the human ego by bringing it into the light of awareness, this will be one of the main purposes of these groups, whether they be enlightened businesses, charitable organizations, schools, or communities of people living together. Enlightened collectives will fulfill an important function in the arising of the new consciousness. Just as egoic collectives pull you into unconsciousness and suffering, the enlightened collective can be a vortex for consciousness that will accelerate the planetary shift.

Incontrovertible Proof of Immortality Ego comes about through a split in the human psyche in which identity separates into two parts that we could call I and me, or me and myself. Every ego is therefore schizophrenic, to use the word in its popular meaning of split personality. You live with a mental image of yourself, a conceptual self that you have a relationship with.

Life itself becomes conceptualized and separated from who you are when you speak of my life. The moment you say or think, my life, and believe in what you are saying, rather than it just being a linguistic convention, you have entered the realm of delusion. If there is such a thing as my life, it follows that I and life are two separate things, and so I can also lose my life, my imaginary treasured possession.

Death becomes a seeming reality and a threat. Words and concepts split life into separate segments that have no reality in themselves. We could even say that the notion, my life, is the original delusion of separateness, the source of ego.

If I and life are two, if I am separate from life, then I am separate from all things, all beings, all people. But how could I be separate from life? What I could there be apart from life, apart from being?

It is utterly impossible. So there is no such thing as my life, and I don't have a life. I am life.

I and life are one. It cannot be otherwise. So how could I lose my life?

How can I lose something that I don't have in the first place? How can I lose something that I am? It is impossible.

[Speaker 2] (1:16:59 - 1:17:14)

So welcome to you all and welcome, sir.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:14 - 1:17:14)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:15 - 1:17:17)

Yes. A good week for you?

[Speaker 1] (1:17:17 - 1:17:18)

Yes. Very good.

[Speaker 2] (1:17:18 - 1:17:22)

Thank you. Very good. So let's do what we've now started as a tradition.

[Speaker 1] (1:17:22 - 1:18:26)

A moment of silence. Yes. And the question is where to put our attention.

And this time I suggest we put our attention into the feeling of aliveness within what I call the inner body, to feel that there's actually life inside your hands. A good place to start is always with the hands to feel. Yes, I can feel somehow that there is an aliveness in here.

The cells are alive. And that's the beginning of feeling being able to feel the entire inner body, the energy field as a global sense of aliveness. And just put our attention there rather than have it in the head.

And then we can enter actual stillness, because stillness doesn't happen until the mind becomes still. Usually the mind doesn't stop until you take attention away from it and put it somewhere else. So we are putting attention into the body.

And so we can go into stillness just for half a minute or so.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:05 - 1:19:14)

Let us begin here on chapter four, which is a very long chapter. Yes. When you wrote this, you must have been at it for a while.

[Speaker 1] (1:19:14 - 1:19:23)

Yes. And in a way, it reflects all the main themes in the book that actually already contained in that chapter. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:19:23 - 1:20:28)

The chapter is called Role Playing the Many Faces of the Ego. So before we really begin, I'd like to take a moment and talk about one of the most frequently asked questions that we receive by far. So many people who are committed to the book and becoming aware of a new way of thinking, a new way of consciousness, want to know how they can relate to people in their lives who are not yet on this path and don't think they need to be.

Sometimes it's a coworker or a friend or even a spouse, you all have said to us on many of your emails, and it can feel very divisive. We got an email from a gentleman who says,

listen, my wife isn't interested in this. I don't know what's going to happen to our relationship.

So that question actually came up as one of the last questions from Qatar, the very first session that we had. But it's an ongoing question that a lot of people, the more they become engaged in the book, are feeling and wanted your response to.

[Speaker 1] (1:20:29 - 1:22:22)

Yes. The main thing is that the shift can only happen inside you. So not to expect other people to also change or to expect or say, I cannot change unless somebody close to me also changes.

The main thing is to take responsibility for your own state of consciousness and allow other people, especially people that you are close to, to be where they are, not to demand that because something is happening inside you and you are beginning to change, not to demand that others should also change. Change does not come about in others by trying to make them change. The most powerful way of bringing about change in others is not trying to bring about change in the other, but to completely accept the other as he or she is.

So that is absolutely vital. There are even schools of psychotherapy that recognize that. So you give the other person your complete acceptance.

And that's part of this change that's happening in us is that we step out of the judgmental mind that continuously judges the other. So we step out of that. And if we step out of the judgmental mind, we are able to simply accept your partner, a close friend, a family member, a relative.

This is where they are at right now. They are still going through their old behavior patterns. What has changed is you are no longer resisting their pattern and reacting to and by reacting, reinforcing their pattern.

That's right. That's right. So you're not taking part in that game anymore.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:22 - 1:22:36)

So part of your change has to be your willingness not to judge, you know, to sit back and to be an observer in your own life and then to more clearly see the ego in others as you also see it in yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:36 - 1:22:36)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:36 - 1:22:37)

Don't judge it.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:37 - 1:22:38)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:22:38 - 1:22:40)

Just know that that's what it is.

[Speaker 1] (1:22:40 - 1:23:04)

Yes. And don't mistake what you're observing, the behavior that people manifest as them. Not that's not who they are.

And that's a vital distinction, because if you mistake that for who they are, then you will perpetuate that kind of behavior. So that's not it won't work. Acceptance is vital acceptance.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:04 - 1:23:27)

And isn't it sort of like I mean, all of you who've asked that question, it's kind of like when people join the church or are, quote, born again, or, you know, we've heard about being born again in the church or you find Jesus or you find Buddha or you discover a new way of being for yourself. And now you want everybody to go to Jesus. Yes.

And you want everybody to believe what you believe.

[Speaker 9] (1:23:28 - 1:23:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:28 - 1:23:32)

That is part of your ego that now wants people to believe what you believe.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:32 - 1:23:57)

Yes. And so that's a trap one can fall into, even with this teaching, which isn't really based on belief at all. So it's not a new belief.

We're not trying to find some new belief. It's going beyond beyond the thinking mind to into awareness. But there is always the danger when you discover something new that you want to talk about it with everybody.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:57 - 1:24:01)

Well, that's how we ended up with this webcast, because yes, I wanted to share it with

other people.

[Speaker 1] (1:24:01 - 1:24:35)

And sometimes it works because sometimes the other person is totally ready and receptive and say, wow, I never realized that. But they recognize it from within because the readiness is there. Right.

But the readiness is not there in everybody. So some people buy copies of the new earth or the power of now for their friends or relatives and then give them out. And sometimes they are disappointed when the other person says, doesn't make sense to me at all.

Means they're not yet ready and that's fine. Maybe they put it on the shelf and maybe 10 years later they're ready. It's quite possible.

[Speaker 2] (1:24:35 - 1:26:23)

Absolutely. Absolutely. So now for class number, I want to get that question out because it comes up over and over and over again on our message board.

So now we're ready for class number four tonight. We're going deeper into identifying the ego in all of its forms. Chapter four, role playing and the many faces of our ego.

Let me start by saying that I think the essence, it's a long chapter, so we have a lot to cover in a short period of time, these 90 minutes. But I think that the essence of this chapter is what you say on page 104, everybody, that you are a human being. What does that mean?

Mastery of life is not a question of control, but of finding a balance between human and being. Mother, father, husband, wife, young, old, all roles that you play, the functions you fulfill, whatever you do, all that belongs to the human dimension. It has its place and needs to be honored.

But in itself, it is not enough for a fulfilled, truly meaningful relationship or life. Human alone is never enough. No matter how hard you try or what you achieve.

I just love that sentence. I loved it so much. I wrote, wow.

Yeah, we're wow. Human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve. Then there is being it is found in the still alert presence of consciousness itself.

The consciousness that you are human is form being is form less human and being are not separate, but interwoven. That's the essence to me of this chapter.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:23 - 1:26:27)

Yes. And one could say the essence of the whole teaching in a way.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:28 - 1:26:28)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:26:28 - 1:26:29)

Way of putting it.

[Speaker 2] (1:26:30 - 1:26:45)

So and of course, human alone is never enough, no matter how hard you try or what you achieve. And that is the essence of why people are in such suffering and such struggle and such, you know, angst against themselves in life, is it not?

[Speaker 1] (1:26:45 - 1:27:49)

And it's why they play roles, because the ego plays roles, because there's unawareness that within you there is the source of all power. So people who are out of touch with the power within or the place where all power resides, the aliveness itself, consciousness itself, then they feel a sense of lack. Why are they not in touch with it?

Because they are not present. They're not in the present moment, because the present moment is the entry point into that place of power within. If you're not present, you don't realize that there is a source of power within.

And then you believe that you need to get secondary power from someone or some situation or other people. Then the ego plays roles to manipulate the environment and other people to get what it thinks it needs, not realizing that all the things that it thinks will give it the power that it seems to lack, all that is already within you, if you could only be present in the now.

[Speaker 2] (1:27:50 - 1:28:00)

I got it. Okay. So the question is how not to lose ourselves in the human dimension.

How not to? By being present in the now.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:00 - 1:28:07)

Yes. And by realizing that whenever you lose yourself, realizing... In the human dimension.

In the human...

[Speaker 2] (1:28:07 - 1:28:10)

That's all the stuff that being human brings with it.

[Speaker 1] (1:28:10 - 1:28:38)

Yes. On the most primordial level, losing oneself means losing oneself in that continuous stream of thinking that goes through people's heads. So it drags you along.

It takes all your conscious attention. Remember, we started today with taking attention away from mind and putting it into the body. Right.

Another thing you can do is take attention away from thinking and put it into sense perceptions and really look and listen and touch things. Like an alertness arises.

[Speaker 2] (1:28:38 - 1:29:01)

You know what I found by doing this? I don't know about all the rest of you, but I have found by being more present, just doing that one exercise, putting yourself... If I'm walking along a path in the woods near my house, be there and not be in my head thinking about what I need to do, just to be there.

And what I found is, I don't know if you all are realizing this too, you are just less stressed.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:01 - 1:29:19)

Less stressed. You're calmer. Yes.

And you don't carry the heavy burden of a personality or me with the burden of past and future, my problematic future, my problematic past. You're much more, you're light and free when you walk in presence.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:19 - 1:29:28)

Okay. But my hairdresser, Andre, asked me this this morning. So I'm going to ask you, then how do you ever plan for anything if you're not thinking about the future?

How do you ever get anything done?

[Speaker 1] (1:29:28 - 1:29:39)

You plan in the present moment. When the time comes to plan and the time is not when you're walking in the woods and when you're walking in the woods, the time is to be present. Unless you want to go to the woods to plan.

[Speaker 2] (1:29:40 - 1:29:41)

You could go to the woods.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:41 - 1:30:06)

You could. Yes, you could. But it's much more likely that your planning is going to be fruitful if it is preceded by a period of presence and stillness.

All right. Any mind activity is much more likely to be beneficial and to be creative if it's preceded by presence and stillness. And then you apply the mind and say, OK, what do I have to do today?

[Speaker 2] (1:30:06 - 1:30:15)

And then you make a list. So if you're going to be in the future, do that as a concentrated event experience.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:16 - 1:30:16)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:16 - 1:30:18)

Now I'm going to sit and plan.

[Speaker 1] (1:30:18 - 1:31:08)

Yes. And don't think about tomorrow. Once you've done that, then you know this is what I have to do so that you're not continuously in the next moment.

You don't project yourself. You play mental movies about what you're going to say when that situation arises. So you can you trust in life that whatever it is that you need when the future comes will be there.

So that's the as far as practical matters are concerned. Future is simply something that you use like I call it a clock time. You make an appointment for tomorrow and you do it tomorrow.

Tomorrow. Yes. So you don't continuously project yourself away from the now to some future, believing that it's more important, going to be more important than the now.

It's not.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:08 - 1:31:17)

Because what you say on page 122, anybody who is one with what he or she does is building the new earth.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:17 - 1:31:17)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:17 - 1:31:18)

That's how you do it.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:19 - 1:31:48)

Being one with what you're doing means being total in what you do so that the main focus of your attention is not where you want to get to. You know where you want to get to. Right.

But the main focus of your attention is on the actual doing now. So this is what the energy flows fully into this. The energy doesn't is not diverted from what you are doing now through mental dysfunction because you're wanting to get there, because then whatever you're doing will be stressful.

[Speaker 2] (1:31:48 - 1:31:53)

Because whatever you give your 100 percent attention to is going to be better anyway. Yes, absolutely.

[Speaker 1] (1:31:54 - 1:32:15)

There was a Zen master. He was he was watching somebody in a competition artery and a man was trying very hard to win this competition, but he just couldn't make it. And then somebody asked the Zen master, what's he doing wrong?

And the Zen master said his need to win drains him of power.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:15 - 1:32:16)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:16 - 1:32:22)

And so his need to win some future. He wants to have some future moment where he's going to be fulfilled.

[Speaker 11] (1:32:22 - 1:32:22)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:22 - 1:32:29)

So his attention is not totally in the now. So the now where all power resides.

[Speaker 11] (1:32:29 - 1:32:29)

Wow.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:29 - 1:32:43)

This power that resides in the now cannot flow then into what you're doing. The openness isn't there because to to have mastery in any endeavor, whatever it is, you need to be total in what you do.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:43 - 1:32:45)

That's what athletes know. The great ones know.

[Speaker 1] (1:32:45 - 1:32:48)

And then they when they enter that, they call it the zone.

[Speaker 2] (1:32:48 - 1:33:01)

Yeah. There was this great article this week, as a matter of fact, those of you saw on Tiger Woods in USA Today saying that he's perhaps the greatest athlete of all times because that's what he knows how to do is to focus and be 100 percent present.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:01 - 1:33:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:02 - 1:33:03)

It's just him in that ball.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:03 - 1:33:04)

Absolutely.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:04 - 1:33:05)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (1:33:05 - 1:33:06)

Of course. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:33:06 - 1:33:55)

OK. So another question that was on the message boards a lot last week when Kadada from California called and was saying was on Skype and she was saying that as a young person, she's thinking about the future and thinking about wanting to have a career and husband and so forth. I think a lot of people felt unsatisfied by your response.

I've heard that a lot of people were like, I feel the same way Kadada feels. A lot of people are wondering where the passion goes, where the ambition goes and how you relate passion and ambition, which is what I think Kadada was saying. OK, with with this this

new awakening.

Yes. So do we now just we're just all so awakened and that we become passive people?

[Speaker 1] (1:33:56 - 1:35:22)

No, the passion is much greater when you are totally focused on what you're doing now. There will be far. The passion will become stress.

The more you're focused on where you want to get to, the more the passion will degenerate into stress. You may still have a high energy, but it's there's a lot of negative energy that comes in. So if you want to remain truly in your power, then you need to be total.

And that applies to the smallest thing that you do during the day. Right. Because even great endeavors consist of small steps, even the greatest thing.

You are doing wonderful work, but every day that you spend consists of small steps. You arrive in the studio, you get dressed, you get ready, you speak on one sentence at a time. It all consists of one needs to be present as you are.

That's where the power comes from every moment and not look to some future moment that promises some kind of greater fulfillment. That is the delusion. It does not mean that you don't have a plan.

You can plan you. I want to achieve to build up a business. I want to do this or that.

But the main focus must be in the doing. And if the main focus is in the doing now, that's the passion is there and the deep enjoyment is there and an intensity of energy and intensity of energy.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:22 - 1:35:33)

Now, people often say that again, what the Zen master said that his desire to desire to win drains him of power, desire to win, drains his need to win, needs him of power.

[Speaker 1] (1:35:34 - 1:35:39)

So the right man would be being the being present.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:39 - 1:35:47)

You just focused on whatever is necessary in that moment, in that moment. I'm sure that struck a lot of people that that Zen master quote.

[Speaker 9] (1:35:47 - 1:35:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:35:48 - 1:36:00)

Because you're so you got to win. You got to make it. You got to succeed.

You got to got to got to. And that's draining energy from you. Instead, we should be focused on this moment, this step and then the next step and then the next step.

[Speaker 1] (1:36:00 - 1:37:05)

That's right. Now, you may win if you try very hard or very stressed. Occasionally it happens that you do win, but it's not really worth it because you get more and more depleted.

And after a while, you lose the you lose the joy of life. If you if if you spend five years of stress and finally you achieve what you wanted, is that worth it? Right.

Enjoyment is very important. Am I losing is that joy in what I'm doing? Is there an enliveness and intensity?

That's the question people believe sometimes high energy in our civilization when there's high energy in what you do. Often people believe there must be stress. They cannot imagine high energy in what you do without stress because that's how we are conditioned because we're always conditioned to look to the next thing.

But there is a much more powerful state of high energy and intensity of energy where the energy is intense and focused. Now, no stress at all. No stress at all.

[Speaker 2] (1:37:05 - 1:37:17)

Well, let's go to our new Earth Study Group watching our webcast at Borders on Michigan Avenue. Hello in Chicago. Hi, everybody.

Hi again. All right. Shireen has a question.

Hello, Shireen.

[Speaker 8] (1:37:18 - 1:37:39)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. We're thrilled to be here.

My question is for you, Eckhart. You say on page one twenty six that constant alertness is required to not let the ego take it over. And I was wondering, do you are you in a constant alertness yourself and do you ever struggle staying alert?

[Speaker 1] (1:37:41 - 1:40:37)

I am usually present in the now, the intensity varies according to the situation. If I'm just sitting alone at home, there's just a background of stillness and there may be thoughts arising, I may be doing this or that. So then and then if a situation arises, the more challenging the situation is, the stronger the sense of presence that arises.

That's a strange thing. I realized that the first time when after this, I underwent this shift. I was actually in a cinema and I was watching a film.

It was a Japanese film about the end of the world. And I saw all these things. Everything was going up in flames.

And this is on the film in the film. And I suddenly found I was becoming more and more peaceful and present inside those intensity of aliveness, as if inside something was saying inside me there is no death. But that's an interpretation.

Really, for the first time, I realized when things go wrong outside, presence intensifies. Everything is fine. There's just a background of presence.

And that's that's wonderful. So because then the challenges that come into your life, two things can happen when a challenging situation or challenging person comes into your life. Either the challenge drags you into old conditioned ego reactions.

Right. For example, an angry person provokes an angry reaction in you. So this means the other person or the situation drags you to their level of consciousness or unconsciousness.

That's one way that one thing that can happen. The other possibility is that any challenge wakes you up more. So you become more intensely present when there's a challenging situation.

And even let's just look at a very simple situation. It's not really challenging, but for some people it is. You're sitting in a traffic jam, not moving.

You have to get somewhere, but it's not moving. So many people would go into negativity at that point. They get stressed.

Their body gets tense. So that situation, then you react in the old way. And perhaps a few minutes ago, you were at home, very still and present and it felt good.

And you were looking at the tree in the class, you get in the car. And the moment the first challenge happens, it can drag you down into unconsciousness. But there's another possibility.

You can be alert and see and recognize that situation as the first challenge of the day. And then you say, OK, here I can either go into reaction or I can go into more presence. And suddenly you're in the same situation.

Nothing is moving, fumes, cars. And suddenly you become actually completely present in that city.

[Speaker 2] (1:40:37 - 1:40:48)

There's an exercise, Shireen, in the workbook that we have for this chapter where we talk about being, there's two, the transparency. Can you describe that? Becoming transparent.

[Speaker 1] (1:40:49 - 1:42:10)

Yes. When you react, when you react against a situation, whatever it is, something irritating, it could be somebody screaming, children screaming, an irritating noise. And immediately when that happens, it's almost as if you were a wall and whatever the irritations were hitting this wall inside you.

And it hurts because something inside you gets hit. Now, as a practice, what you can do is imagine yourself being transparent. So what before was hitting this wall inside you and that was painful, that was the resistance that this shouldn't be happening, that's painful.

Now imagine yourself being transparent and the irritating thing passes through you. You can do it, I mean, for example, one of the most irritating noises is perhaps a drill that goes, they break up the road. And so practice with that, become transparent to that, feel the noise passing through you.

It's wonderful. And suddenly in the very same situation that before would have provoked a negative reaction in you, you actually become more present and more peaceful. So the very thing that would have made you react now makes you more present.

Makes you more present.

[Speaker 2] (1:42:11 - 1:42:14)

Also, you talk about the deep lake, the deep lake effect. Would you describe that?

[Speaker 1] (1:42:14 - 1:43:11)

Yes. So the lake, if you imagine a vast lake, the surface of the lake changes all the time according to the weather, according to the wind. Sometimes it's rough, sometimes it's very still.

But even when it's rough, if you imagine you are the lake and whatever happens in your life, the external situations of your life are the surface of the lake. External situations change continuously. Sometimes it's rough, sometimes it's fine, it's very still.

But no matter, even if they are rough, the surface, the depth of the lake remains always

undisturbed and you are the lake in its depth. So your external life is the surface of things, surface reality. Your ego.

Ego for the world of form and included in the surface reality is even all your thoughts. Because what we are talking about is the inner depth is deeper than your thoughts and your emotions.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:11 - 1:43:16)

And your presence is the bottom of the lake, is the lake, is the full lake.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:16 - 1:43:30)

Yes. And it's wonderful when you begin to realize that your inner state is no longer dependent on and determined by what's going on the surface. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:43:31 - 1:43:31)

Got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:43:32 - 1:44:01)

Got it. And that's and that's incredible freedom. That's true freedom.

Yes. You can arrive at that place, even if you are in a prison cell. And I've had letters from prison.

People have written to me and said, we are free. I am free. I found that place where my inner state is no longer dependent on what's happening outside.

Of course, the prisoner would still prefer to be outside on that level. Fine. But that's right.

Deep down, there is freedom from external conditions.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:01 - 1:44:04)

Because you are connected to the beingness of yourself.

[Speaker 1] (1:44:04 - 1:44:05)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:05 - 1:44:06)

The consciousness of yourself.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:06 - 1:44:07)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:07 - 1:44:48)

And you can use the word being you can use the word consciousness. You can use the word. A lot of people use the word soul.

Yes. Or inner being. Yes.

Higher self. The word doesn't matter. The word doesn't matter.

Thank you, Shireen and everybody at Borders. Thank you very much. Very alert.

So let's let's get into this chapter. You say that we can assume that the ego is at play whenever we feel superior or inferior to anyone else. Now, I know this is true.

When you see the person who's the biggest jerk out there, you know, people who act with such a sense of superiority and arrogance. I know that that is because they are really feeling inferior.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:49 - 1:44:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:49 - 1:44:50)

But still hard to deal with.

[Speaker 9] (1:44:50 - 1:44:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:44:51 - 1:45:06)

But what surprised me is that you say that often people who are also shy are also acting out of their egos. And you say whenever you feel superior or inferior to anyone, that's the ego in you. Why is that?

[Speaker 1] (1:45:07 - 1:45:19)

Well, if you're shy, then you're you're what I what you fear is to be found wanting. But so you're not you're there.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:19 - 1:45:22)

The fear is that the attention may take the form of disapproval or criticism.

[Speaker 1] (1:45:22 - 1:45:59)

Yes. You're afraid of that. So because you're afraid of that, whatever the disapproval or

the criticism would represent an injury of your mentally mind made sense of self, which is the ego.

So it was the image that I have of myself as a capable person or whatever it is that I'm trying to uphold. If I if I encounter criticism, the ego immediately will be hurt. And so a shy person would not dare say anything because they're afraid of ego loss, afraid of ego loss.

[Speaker 2] (1:45:59 - 1:46:00)

Got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:00 - 1:46:33)

And so because sometimes that's mistaken for an egoless person, a person who's very it's not. And deep down inside the shy person or this person who is suffering from this sense of inferiority, there's a desire, the unexpressed desire to be superior. Wow.

And inside the person who acts superior, who seems to have a big confident ego, there's always the hidden fear that he might be inferior. And his whole acting out is to compensate for that hidden fear of being inferior.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:34 - 1:46:38)

OK, behind every positive self-concept is the hidden fear of not being good enough.

[Speaker 1] (1:46:38 - 1:46:39)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:46:39 - 1:46:51)

Behind every negative self-concept is the hidden desire of being the greatest or better than others. And where does self-esteem fit into all of that? Where is real self-esteem?

What would true self-esteem look like?

[Speaker 1] (1:46:51 - 1:48:03)

Well, first, there is the ego self-esteem, which is really even if you have high ego self-esteem, as we've just seen, there's always hidden fear underneath it. It's always there to compensate for that fear that you feel of not being good enough or perhaps failing. So you need to play a role of being big to compensate for the fear of failure that's deep down.

So that's but that's usually the world calls that he has. Yes, the world would say he or she has high self-esteem of people who have big egos. But the world doesn't realize that

that's not true self-esteem.

True self-esteem goes much deeper. It's finding the source of power and aliveness deep inside. We talked about the lake realizing that within the depth of your being, there is that continuous source of intense aliveness and power, which is the stillness out of which everything comes.

The potential, the unexpressed potential for all form is there within every human being. You just have to become still.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:03 - 1:48:08)

So true self-esteem is realizing that that sense of being, that presence is there.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:08 - 1:48:10)

It comes out of the stillness.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:10 - 1:48:14)

That it comes out of the stillness. And that presence in me is the same as the presence in all people.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:14 - 1:48:15)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:15 - 1:48:22)

And when you recognize that and act from that space within yourself, that is when you have true self-esteem.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:22 - 1:48:29)

That's true self-esteem. And self-esteem then is not no longer derived from the belief that you are better than somebody else.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:29 - 1:48:38)

And so you are not attached to the labels or the roles that you play. And you speak about the many various roles that everybody has.

[Speaker 1] (1:48:38 - 1:48:51)

Yes. And then you're no longer devastated by criticism or get very angry when you're criticized as the ego does. The ego is either totally devastated when you get, or it gets very angry when it gets criticized the self-image.

[Speaker 2] (1:48:52 - 1:49:05)

But there's a role that most women in our society and all societies play is that role of mother, which is more than just a role. I mean, it's real. It's not just a role.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:05 - 1:49:52)

Yes. So we need to differentiate between the function that you need to fulfill in this world for a while. Right.

So if you have a child, your function is to be the mother and to fulfill the function of being the mother, which of course is looking after the child, sometimes set limits, what the child is allowed to do and so on. That's all fine. Now, if you become too identified with your function, then the function turns into a role.

And then you cannot let go of the role. And that gets stuck to you. And even when the child grows up and especially becomes a teenager, you still behave as if your child were small and you still try to control and try to protect when it's no longer appropriate.

[Speaker 2] (1:49:52 - 1:49:53)

I got it.

[Speaker 1] (1:49:53 - 1:50:05)

Because you're stuck with a role then. So sometimes when the children become adults, the adult children are still treated by their parents, parents who are stuck in the role of parents.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:05 - 1:50:06)

They can't let go of the role.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:06 - 1:50:14)

So they believe unconsciously that they need to continue to protect and ultimately control what the child does.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:14 - 1:50:16)

Because you don't parent a child the same at every age.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:16 - 1:50:17)

No.

[Speaker 2] (1:50:17 - 1:50:34)

Absolutely. And so they've lost sight of the function that they had as mother to be guide and to direct and to correct and to help and to protect. And they want to carry that into the future.

Yes. Because they are attached to the role.

[Speaker 1] (1:50:34 - 1:51:05)

Yes. OK. And it's not only when the when this when children grow up, even when the children already are still small.

Right. If you are completely identified with this role of mother, then also it can become obsessive. So you might become too controlling or overprotective.

Certain functions become overemphasized. You go too far in fulfilling these functions. So so what was good initially is looking after the child, protecting the child can become too much.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:05 - 1:51:12)

OK, I got it. I got it. Tonight, actress Jenny McCarthy is joining us.

Oh, yeah. Via Skype. Hey, Jenny.

[Speaker 10] (1:51:13 - 1:51:14)

Hi.

[Speaker 2] (1:51:14 - 1:51:52)

How are you? Do you know that when I was reading this book, Jenny, when I was reading my book, here it is. My book's all kind of torn up now.

When I was reading this book on page one oh four, I wrote when I read, as you look at, listen to touch or help your child with this so that you are alert, still completely present, not wanting anything other than that moment as it is. And this way you make room for being in that moment. You're present.

You're not a father, a mother. You are the alertness, the stillness. You are the being behind the doing.

I wrote Jenny McCarthy because that reminded me so much of what you had said about your function as a mother.

[Speaker 4] (1:51:54 - 1:52:34)

Yes, absolutely. You know, I read this book when it first came out, and that was one of

my big wake up calls, realizing that when I was with Evan, all I needed to do was just be with Evan. And our relationship bloomed like you wouldn't believe the love connection was there.

He was getting fulfilled because he knew even when Evan wasn't able to speak, this was when Evan still wasn't able to use words energetically, he felt that I was with him, that I was being with him. And I'm so grateful, Eckhart, that you that you taught me that. So did you have a question or do you?

[Speaker 2] (1:52:34 - 1:52:35)

I do.

[Speaker 4] (1:52:35 - 1:53:35)

I do have a question. Okay, it's long, so bear with me. It's not that long, but bear with me.

One very common emotion that I have personally experienced and that I have seen in many mothers is this emotion called guilt. Mothers today experience a few different forms of guilt, and I'm going to explain three different versions where I'm sure mom's listening right now. One of them will say, that's my guilt.

Yeah. The first one is the nine to five working mom feels guilty for leaving her baby with the nanny all day. The second one is the stay-at-home mom feels guilty for getting bored playing with her, you know, her son or daughter all day long.

I mean, sometimes you can only play choo-choo so long and you can't do it anymore and you feel guilty for not wanting to do that. And the third, the last one being, and this one I can really connect to, the thousands of mothers I've met who have children with autism carry a huge amount of guilt with them. It's hard for me to get out, sorry.

[Speaker 7] (1:53:40 - 1:54:07)

Take your time. I haven't cried yet in one interview, so I'm sorry. But a huge amount of guilt that it's in some way their fault, our fault, that our child became autistic.

So my question is, can you offer some insight as to how we can look at things differently from a guilt that we carry as mothers?

[Speaker 2] (1:54:08 - 1:54:22)

Nine to five guilt, choo-choo guilt, and feeling guilty because your child has autism or whatever your child has, and that you are somehow responsible. Thanks, Jenny. That was so well said.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:22 - 1:54:56)

Thank you. Before I say anything, I read your book, while it was still in manuscript form. You gave it to me and I was very impressed by what you did with your child, the courage that you had, where other people would have succumbed and fallen into negativity or self-pity.

You were able to turn it all around and make it into something very positive, at the same time helping many other people, not helping your child, but helping many other people.

[Speaker 10] (1:54:57 - 1:54:58)

Thank you, Eckhart.

[Speaker 1] (1:54:58 - 1:57:55)

You still feel guilty, of course, that's the structure, even after all this wonderful work that you have done with your son. It's amazing, isn't it, that there are certain structures in the human mind that operate no matter how much good you do. They carry the structures, carry on playing themselves out, and they are part of the, what I call, not the content of the ego, but the structure of the ego.

So nobody could have done a better job than you with your boy, in addition helping many others writing that book, and yet you feel guilty. It's not that you feel guilty, there's a certain structure in the thought processes that produces the feeling of guilt. And the other two examples that you gave, there's the mother that has a job, nine to five, the child is with the nanny, and the mother feels guilty about that, cannot accept that this is how it is, and the other mother is at home playing with the child, feels guilty about not doing more in the world.

And so, whatever it is, if you don't tackle the, recognize the structure in your mind for what it is, then you will always believe that the answer to solving this question lies in the realm of content. In other words, content is the situation. So if I change the situation, perhaps I won't feel guilty anymore.

Then this would be, if you think that this so-called problem, it's not a real problem, it's a mind-created problem, if you believe that this problem can be solved on an external level by changing something that you do, it will not, because no matter what situation you go into, the guilt will come back, because in this world you are limited, you can't do everything. You either do this, or you do that, but you cannot be both at home and at work at the same time. So the mind, no matter what situation you go into, will bring up the same structures.

So unless you are very alert, and you recognize that these are egoic mind structures, nothing to do with content, then you realize that what the ego, one of the jobs of the ego

is to blame others. Another job of the ego is to make yourself feel guilty. Both of these things strengthen your sense of identity, their negative senses of identity.

And the ego loves to have a strong sense of identity, and no sense of identity is stronger than a negative one, where you condemn yourself for something. And you can see, objectively speaking, it doesn't make sense to feel guilty in your case, and in many other people's cases.

[Speaker 2] (1:57:55 - 1:58:04)

Yes, because if you have to work 9 to 5 to provide for your child, and make, you know, a safe home for your child, and food on the table for your child...

[Speaker 1] (1:58:04 - 1:58:48)

You are doing the best you can. You are doing the best you can. And your mind doesn't, your mind works according to its old conditioning.

So recognize, when those thoughts come, recognize that these are not actual valid thoughts that are actually concern a true situation. They are thoughts generated by the ego. And if you can recognize them as thoughts generated by the ego, structural, not content-based, then in the moment of recognition, they begin to lose their power over you.

Wow. And they will try to come in. It's not, you can't do it just for once.

They will try to come in the next day.

[Speaker 2] (1:58:48 - 1:59:26)

Because you, Jenny, wrote that book. Obviously, I read the book too, because you were here, and shared the book, you know, with our audience. You, you know, refused to take no for an answer.

You fought for Evan. You did the best you knew how to do. And when you didn't know, you sought other answers to figure out the best to do.

So there is a part of you, the part of you that is really you, right, Eckhart? Yes. That knows that.

Yes. True? True, Jenny?

True. Absolutely. And that little crazy talk in your head is just that.

Crazy talk in your head. That's the correct expression. Yeah.

That crazy talk in your head. Yeah.

[Speaker 4] (1:59:27 - 1:59:35)

It really, I just had a huge awakening moment when he said that within me. So I get it. Absolutely.

That's a wow.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:36 - 1:59:37)

That's a wow. Thanks, Jenny.

[Speaker 4] (1:59:38 - 1:59:40)

That's a wow. Thank you both so much.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:40 - 1:59:42)

Say hello to my palsy-wowsy, Jim.

[Speaker 4] (1:59:42 - 1:59:43)

I will. He sends his love to you.

[Speaker 2] (1:59:43 - 2:00:00)

Yeah, he sent me flowers after he was on for Horton Hears Who and said- I know. I made him. Oh, you made him.

Okay. His note said, from your palsy-wowsy. Okay.

Thanks. Thanks a lot. Dion is calling now from Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Dion, what's your question?

[Speaker 6] (2:00:01 - 2:00:03)

Hi, Oprah. Hi, Eckhart. Nice talking to you.

[Speaker 2] (2:00:03 - 2:00:04)

Nice talking to you.

[Speaker 6] (2:00:05 - 2:00:24)

My question is, although I'm now aware of some of the roles that I've played, it's still really easy to slip back into them sometimes. And I'm at this stage where I recognize that I've been playing a role after the moment has passed. But I'd like to know, how do I recognize it in the moment before it happens, especially in those unexpected moments?

[Speaker 2] (2:00:25 - 2:00:27)

About playing a role, did you say?

[Speaker 6] (2:00:28 - 2:00:46)

Yes. Yes. So sometimes I'm aware of a role, but I'm only aware after the moment has passed that I've slipped back into some of the roles that I've recognized.

I'm just trying to figure out, how do I stay in the moment and recognize the role before it happens, so I don't slip back into the same role again? Okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:00:46 - 2:02:22)

Oh, yes. Well, this is a very common thing that happens to people as they grow in awareness. At first, the awareness does not reach many of the conditioned behavior patterns.

The awareness at first, and this applies to many, many people I've heard this so many times, people in whom the awareness begins to grow, this dimension that we call presence or awareness. At first, the awareness does not necessarily flow into all parts of their lives. There are certain behavior patterns that remain as they are, but the awareness comes in after they have happened.

So in this case, in an interaction that you have with other people, you play a certain conditioned role without knowing it. So you are the role. When it's over, and you go away from that situation, suddenly you realize, oh dear, I did it again.

I played that role again, whatever the role is. And that is how our awareness at first comes in, in many cases, after the event. And retrospectively, the presence or the awareness recognizes the old pattern after it's happened.

And what then tends to happen, and I believe this is going to happen to you because I've seen it in so many people, the time gap between the event and the awareness gets shorter. So what then happens is the old pattern operates still, you play the role, and immediately afterwards, you realize, oh, I played it again. But there was virtually no time gap anymore.

Immediately afterwards, you realize it.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:22 - 2:02:23)

So that means you're awakening.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:24 - 2:02:24)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:02:24 - 2:02:28)

You get closer and closer, so the time gap is shorter and shorter.

[Speaker 1] (2:02:28 - 2:03:23)

The next step, the next thing that happens is in the middle of playing a role, you suddenly realize, oh, I'm playing that role again. So the awareness has come in, you're still doing it, but then you know that you're doing it. An enormous difference.

So you're not just playing the role, there is the other dimension comes in at the time of playing the role or whatever the behavior pattern may be, and you realize, I'm doing it again. And that's wonderful, too. And the next step is, it's amazing, it's the same pattern as I've observed in thousands of people.

The next step is just before you are about to enter into some condition pattern like role playing, the awareness is there and you can feel the impulse inside you of wanting to play the role. And you can then say, I don't need to play that anymore.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:23 - 2:03:29)

Well, let's clarify what we mean by role playing. Thank you so much, Dionne from Port of Spain. Thank you.

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (2:03:30 - 2:03:30)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:03:30 - 2:03:52)

Let's clarify what we mean by roles, because I think it's confusing to some people who say, well, listen, I am a doctor, I am a teacher, I am a lawyer, I am a store clerk, I am a that. Those are labels. And what is the difference between the job functions that we have and the so-called and roles, you know, and the roles that we play?

[Speaker 1] (2:03:53 - 2:04:35)

I met a woman, middle aged, and she talked to me in a certain way. And I asked, are you a school teacher? And she said, now, how did you know that I'm a school teacher?

So she was because she had already she talks to people as if she were talking to the children at school. OK, so and even when she said, how did you know she was pointing a finger? OK, OK.

You naughty boy. How did you know that? Yes.

Yes. Of course, that's how I knew it, because she had become completely identified with her function. So the role took her over.

She couldn't leave it. She couldn't leave her function behind after work, even inside her family. She behaved like a teacher.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:35 - 2:04:41)

You say when you adjust the way you interact based upon who you're talking to, you're playing a role.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:41 - 2:04:50)

Yes, that also. So do we talk to everyone the same? No.

Most people, if they but you need to have some power of self-observation, which is another one.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:50 - 2:04:52)

We talk to children differently.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:52 - 2:04:52)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:04:53 - 2:04:55)

Friends differently than we do a head of state.

[Speaker 1] (2:04:55 - 2:05:16)

Yes. Or the so-called important person and a so-called not important janitor in a building different than your boss. Yes.

And this is very interesting to observe in one's self because you need to observe it in yourself. Otherwise, you won't know that you're doing it. And you can only observe it in yourself if there's some awareness there that is outside of the role.

[Speaker 2] (2:05:16 - 2:06:03)

And is this why when you go to a party or you're in an event and you don't know people, the first thing you want to know is a friend of mine, Marlene, said to me who is taking our class every week. Hello, Marlene, that she was at a gathering recently and that she was trying to practice the principles of a new earth and that she was introducing herself around the table and she was doing that in such a way that she didn't talk about what she had done or accomplished or who she was married to or where she lived and that

one of the people at the table said, we don't care about who you are. We want to know what you do.

We want to know what do you do. And what I realize is people want to know that so they can determine your so-called value.

[Speaker 9] (2:06:04 - 2:06:04)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:04 - 2:06:11)

And to see if you will be of value or yes, perhaps that or necessary.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:11 - 2:06:11)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:12 - 2:06:14)

For them to play the role with you.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:14 - 2:06:34)

Oh, yes. Enhance the ego or whether you might be a threat to the ego, whether they can use you or whether they need to be afraid of you or whether they want to have further contact in their circle. Yes.

And all these things. And then many judgments go through people's minds often when they meet somebody and they're automatic.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:34 - 2:06:43)

You observe what that is, what people mean by what do you do really, isn't it? For the most part, they want to say, what do you do? Let me place it in terms of.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:43 - 2:06:43)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:43 - 2:06:45)

How valuable that's going to be to you.

[Speaker 1] (2:06:46 - 2:06:55)

Now, when you don't play roles anymore, you don't have to become strange. And then when you go to parties and somebody asks you, what do you do? You say, I am.

[Speaker 2] (2:06:55 - 2:07:02)

Yes, I am. I am that I am. That is all that I am.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:02 - 2:07:14)

This is the basic truth. But you don't need to say that when you go to a party. You don't.

You can actually talk quite normally without being identified with what you say. If people ask me so.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:14 - 2:07:29)

So that's the essence of what you're trying to say to us in this chapter is that, of course, there are all roles that we are assigned or labels that we use to identify ourself. What you're saying is the problem is when you become completely identified.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:29 - 2:07:30)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:30 - 2:07:32)

And you think that is who you are.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:32 - 2:07:45)

Yes. And you behave and act as if that were who you are. So you get trapped inside that that conditioned personality.

And whatever you do, then there's the personalities acting out.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:45 - 2:07:54)

You mention in the book where where you play the role of patient. And if you go to a doctor who's playing the role of doctor, he often doesn't see you, the person.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:54 - 2:07:55)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:07:55 - 2:07:56)

Because he's playing the role.

[Speaker 1] (2:07:56 - 2:08:25)

Yes. He has become so identified with his function that the function has taken him over and his has become a role. So and many patients can actually feel that when they go to

a doctor, whether there's a human being still there or whether the doctor has become a role.

And so when the doctor has become a role, the the when you go to that doctor, you don't feel acknowledged anymore in your being. You feel he might be very competent as a doctor.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:25 - 2:08:26)

I know.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:26 - 2:08:36)

But something vital is lacking in the interaction. When you see a doctor, he might be the greatest expert in his field. It still doesn't help.

Something very vital is missing.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:36 - 2:08:47)

And everybody and you feel completely that happened to me recently where you feel completely dismissed and disconnected because he you're you're you're thinking he's just trying to get me out of here so he can get the next person in.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:47 - 2:08:47)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:47 - 2:08:47)

Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (2:08:48 - 2:08:52)

Now, if he does that to you, you can imagine what he does. That's a normal person.

[Speaker 2] (2:08:52 - 2:09:02)

Yeah. It's usually people treat me, treat me pretty. Anyway, Dimitri Skyping us from Moscow.

Hello.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:02 - 2:09:06)

Yes. Hi. Hello.

Hello. Hello.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:07 - 2:09:11)

Hi. What time is what time is it there? I'm always curious.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:12 - 2:09:16)

It's about five, 5 a.m. in the morning.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:16 - 2:09:20)

You're up early. Well, thank you. Thank you for joining us.

Your question.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:22 - 2:09:38)

I'd like to first thank you very much for your job. It's an unprecedented event when you spread consciousness all around the world. So thank you very much.

Thank you very much for selection for being there.

[Speaker 2] (2:09:38 - 2:09:39)

Thank you.

[Speaker 3] (2:09:39 - 2:10:26)

And my question is, you know, I do some movement exercises, very ancient ones, and they bring me to stillness. And so I experience stillness when I do this movements and I lose it when I come to my work. No, I do some pauses, breathings before I start my work.

But when I'm provoked, I'm getting into the power games, especially when I'm criticized. So can you recommend something in this? Thank you.

OK.

[Speaker 2] (2:10:27 - 2:10:31)

Yes. I like the way Dimitri breathe. Yes.

It was good.

[Speaker 3] (2:10:32 - 2:10:36)

It's so-called panoramic breath when you breathe in all surroundings.

[Speaker 1] (2:10:41 - 2:11:47)

So what would you recommend? Well, this is you are able to access that dimension of

presence when you are not disturbed by external situations, when you are not being challenged. The ego is inactive at those times.

And when you go into ordinary work situations and so on, you begin to relate to people and immediately the ego with its old conditioning comes back and takes you over and you lose yourself in the roles you play and so on. So when do you know? Because we had a question earlier that talked about playing roles and becoming aware of the role playing afterwards, after the event.

Do you become aware at the end of the day or do you become aware in individual instances after like a few minutes after it's happened at work? At what point does the awareness come in?

[Speaker 3] (2:11:48 - 2:12:20)

It depends. If the situation is minor, I'm aware, I guess, five minutes after or maybe into the situation. But when I'm provoked deeply or, for instance, when I'm deeply criticized by my boss, I can be in this for a week and only on weekend when I do the movements to change the tense body position into the relaxed one, I can manage to understand, wow, yes, it was again.

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:12:20 - 2:14:29)

Another very helpful thing you can do is not just confine your presence practice to those periods at home, but bring in small, very brief moments of presence into your everyday life. For example, I don't work at work. No matter where you are, you may be sitting at a computer talking on the phone or whatever it is.

Let's I'll give you two or three examples. The phone rings. It wants to be answered.

Let it ring two more times than is necessary before you answer it. The phone rings. Normally you would pick it up, let it ring twice and be present while it rings.

Allow it to ring, but be there in your presence. Use it as a signal to tell you be present now. So that's one way of bringing a little bit of presence into an ordinary work situation.

Or you're at a computer, put a flower next to your computer and occasionally look away from the screen and look at the flower. It doesn't take long, just 20 seconds is fine, 30 seconds. Look at the flower and feel its aliveness inside you.

It helps you. Anything natural can bring you back into presence much more easily than things that are man-made. In our body, at work, when you find a moment, turn away from your desk or whatever it is and feel the aliveness.

Do your breathing, but not the whole thing, just for a few seconds. One conscious breath in and out is a meditation. You don't have to wait for your meditation until you get home.

Bring the meditation into the spaces, into your daily life, as many spaces as possible. That's what, otherwise, the mind has such momentum, the egoic mind, that it will drag you along and you will lose yourself in it. Bringing in small spaces.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:30 - 2:14:31)

Within your daily life.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:31 - 2:14:32)

Daily life.

[Speaker 2] (2:14:32 - 2:14:36)

Yeah. In addition to your panoramic breathing, Dimitri. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:14:37 - 2:15:14)

That's beautiful. And then you will find that in the midst of situations, the awareness is more likely to be there. And we've already, you may have listened to what I said to a previous questioner about becoming aware after falling back into old conditioned behaviors.

And you will experience the same thing, especially if you practice bringing these spaces of awareness into your daily life. Then you will find that gradually presence will be strong enough, even when the boss speaks to you and criticizes you.

[Speaker 2] (2:15:14 - 2:15:16)

Even when he's on the third ring.

[Speaker 1] (2:15:19 - 2:16:23)

So it's a gradual process where presence goes into every aspect of your life, gradually. It permeates your everyday life, because that's what is needed. Even if you were the greatest meditator and you could achieve sublime states twice a day at home when you meditate, it wouldn't help you if presence does not permeate every aspect of your life.

Yes. And because otherwise you'll be like the father who was doing in Buddhism, they have a meta meditation. It's called meditating on loving kindness.

So you sit there and say, I love all the people in this house. I love all the people in this city. I love all the people, all the people, all the people, all the people in this house be at peace, all the people in this city be at peace, all the people in this country be at peace.

And then the daughter comes in and says, dad, and the father says, leave me alone. Can't you see I'm doing loving kindness meditation?

[Speaker 2] (2:16:25 - 2:16:53)

Thank you, Dimitri. It goes back to what you were saying earlier. Can I sense my, what you said on page 79, this is in last week's chapter on core of ego.

Can I sense my essential beingness, the I am in the background of my life at all time? That's what you're saying to him. To be more accurate, can I sense the I am that I am at this moment?

Can I sense my essential identity as consciousness itself, even when my boss is yelling at me?

[Speaker 1] (2:16:53 - 2:17:01)

And then perhaps precisely in moments of greatest challenge, there's a greater intensity of presence.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:01 - 2:17:06)

Because those moments would be his most sacred moments, would they not be? That's how you know.

[Speaker 1] (2:17:06 - 2:17:23)

So it's when your greatest challenges become, instead of drawing you into unconscious reactions, when your greatest challenges intensify your presence, then that's how it works. That's the miracle. And that's how the beauty of this work.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:24 - 2:17:29)

Thank you again for Skyping us from Moscow. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[Speaker 3] (2:17:30 - 2:17:47)

I'd like to tell that I'm very familiar with your voice because I have some recordings of your talks. So your voice already permeated me. Thank you very much for bringing presence into the life of this planet.

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (2:17:47 - 2:18:06)

Thank you. I like all your books in the background there too, Dimitri. That's very nice.

So I want to look at some of the email questions, which there's a question from Grayson

Pleasant in California that says, since I've been an owner of a dog, I find myself so much more in the present. My question is, why am I naturally so much more present with an animal than I'm sometimes dealing with people?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:06 - 2:18:39)

Ah, yes. Well, the animal does not provoke thought activity because the dog is not thinking. When the dog looks at you, the dog is not thinking what kind of a person you are.

The dog is not judging you. The dog is at a state of consciousness prior to the arrival of thought. So the dog is, and that state has certain similarities with a state of presence, which is a state of going beyond thinking where we are going.

In both cases, if you are...

[Speaker 2] (2:18:39 - 2:18:41)

So in that way, the dogs are a little more enlightened than we are?

[Speaker 1] (2:18:41 - 2:18:47)

In some ways, the dogs are more connected with being than we are, than normal humans are.

[Speaker 2] (2:18:47 - 2:18:51)

Normal humans are. Because that's where they are all the time.

[Speaker 1] (2:18:51 - 2:19:04)

Yes. And I sometimes call them dogs and cats, particularly because that's the pets that for millions of humans are very important in their lives. Right.

I call them guardians of being.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:05 - 2:19:06)

Guardians of being.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:06 - 2:19:22)

Because for many people, they fulfill that function. For many people who are so lost in their minds, so much involved in their thought processes, the only moments they have when they are not trapped in that is when they are relating to their animal, their pet.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:23 - 2:19:35)

All right. I have to get to this quote. Well, I'll get to that in a moment.

You say that the role of the parent should not be to spare children from all suffering. Why not?

[Speaker 1] (2:19:36 - 2:19:54)

Because first of all, you can't. It would be futile to even attempt. Of course, you protect the child as much as you can.

But every human being has to go through a certain amount of suffering. You cannot come to this planet and avoid suffering.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:56 - 2:19:58)

Because that's what being a human being is.

[Speaker 1] (2:19:58 - 2:19:58)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:59 - 2:20:01)

There's some discord.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:01 - 2:20:19)

Yes. And that is how we grow. If there were a human being that could have avoided all suffering, that human being would be totally superficial and totally identified with the external form of things because it's suffering that drives you deeper, drives you within what you need to find.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:20 - 2:20:22)

And by suffering, do you mean not getting what we want?

[Speaker 1] (2:20:23 - 2:20:36)

Well, that's one form of suffering, too. There are different forms of suffering. Many forms of suffering, of course, are generated by the ego itself.

These are ultimately unnecessary forms of suffering.

[Speaker 10] (2:20:37 - 2:20:37)

Right.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:37 - 2:20:44)

But they don't they are necessary for as long as you are unconscious. And another word for suffering would be challenges or difficulties.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:45 - 2:20:45)

Correct.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:45 - 2:20:47)

Yes. Yes. Challenges.

[Speaker 2] (2:20:47 - 2:20:50)

So you can't be a human being without being challenged.

[Speaker 1] (2:20:51 - 2:21:47)

No, that would be you would miss the whole purpose for being here. So you need to see even your children will not escape. They will soon or later and usually sooner than later.

They will encounter their form of suffering, whatever it is. You protect them as much as you can. But when you see certain things are inevitable, they may do things, unconscious behavior.

They may generate their own suffering, self-generated, or it may happen to them from the outside. But no matter what, it will happen. And then rather than going into intense anguish, see this is human suffering.

And every human, you had to go through your forms of suffering. In my case, for example, I had my parents were had very heavy pain bodies. There was constant conflict at home.

And that was my constant suffering.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:48 - 2:21:49)

Pain body. That's next week.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:49 - 2:21:49)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:49 - 2:21:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:50 - 2:21:51)

We'll talk about that. Okay.

[Speaker 2] (2:21:51 - 2:21:53)

No, finish the sentence. I just wanted to say.

[Speaker 1] (2:21:54 - 2:22:21)

So this, of course, not only applies to children, it also applies to other people that may be close to you and going through their suffering. You do what you can to help them. Whatever you can.

The important thing is that you don't go into anguish yourself because by going into anxiety and anguish yourself, you're not helping them at all. Because whatever state you are in transmits itself to others.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:21 - 2:22:28)

How does playing a role at work keep us from being powerful?

[Speaker 1] (2:22:30 - 2:22:57)

Well, if you play a role at work, you always have a secondary motive in what you do because the ego is at work. You are not totally focused on the task at hand because there is some self-interest there. You want to protect yourself.

You want to get credit for yourself. You want to perhaps eliminate other people around you, or perhaps you want to use other people for your own purposes.

[Speaker 2] (2:22:57 - 2:23:00)

A lot of times this happens when people get promoted to supervisors.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:00 - 2:23:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:23:00 - 2:23:20)

You know, they were really good in whatever position they had, and then they get promoted to supervisors, have a little more power, means they're not just now functioning at work for themselves, but now they're over other people. And a little bit of power goes to their heads, and before you know it, trouble.

[Speaker 1] (2:23:20 - 2:24:04)

That's absolutely right. And that's the ego. If you have a position of little power, then the ego is kind of there in potential.

It's latent as far as your work situation is concerned. The similar situation you have in certain third world countries where often you find a revolution overthrows the government, and the people who initiate the revolution have the best intentions they want. Eventually they want to do away with corruption.

They want the best for their country. The moment they get into power, the latent ego in them, although they had good intentions, comes up and they repeat the same dysfunction that they wanted to do away with.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:05 - 2:24:06)

Happens all the time.

[Speaker 1] (2:24:06 - 2:24:06)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:24:07 - 2:24:20)

All right. Charlie lives in Stockholm. Charlie, you were on earlier today.

We Skyped you up on the open word show earlier. Well, you've been up a long time. I hear you have a question about raising your three-year-old daughter.

Go ahead.

[Speaker 5] (2:24:21 - 2:25:11)

I do have a question about that. A lot of it, I guess, has been answered just by listening to tonight's show. But the question about her is, how do you stay present when you're trying to discipline your child and she starts screaming and shouting?

And she's only three, so I can't really explain to her that it's really your ego that's coming out. And I feel like she's learning these roles. I guess my question is, I want to raise her as a more conscious human being.

I don't want her to be awakened at the age of 35 like me. How do you raise a more conscious child? And how do you stay more conscious when you're dealing with conflict?

Because I don't want to set a negative pattern for when she's 16 and she wants to borrow the car, for example.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:11 - 2:25:34)

Yes, yes. I would suggest that you pay, first of all, pay more attention to your inner state than to what is happening to your daughter. Because I believe you experience, perhaps, your daughter causing you feelings of anxiety sometimes.

[Speaker 5] (2:25:35 - 2:25:36)

Yeah, right on.

[Speaker 1] (2:25:36 - 2:26:39)

You believe that. Now, that seems to be the case, that your daughter, by going through certain kinds of behavior, causes you feelings of anxiety. But ultimately, that is not the case.

You cause yourself the feelings of anxiety. When your daughter refuses to eat, she's not making you anxious. Only you can do that.

So it is vital what state of consciousness you are in, what emotional state you are in, when you are relating to your daughter. Because if you're often in a state of anxiety, you get into a vicious circle. The anxiety that you believe was caused by your daughter's behavior, but is ultimately caused by your reaction to your daughter's behavior, that anxiety then will affect her.

And that is a nervous energy field that will provoke further so-called bad behavior in her. Because children absorb...

[Speaker 2] (2:26:39 - 2:26:44)

I was going to say, a three-year-old is absorbing that and picking up that energy more than even your language.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:44 - 2:26:45)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:45 - 2:26:47)

They're picking up the energy that you carry.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:47 - 2:26:48)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:26:48 - 2:26:49)

Right. Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:26:49 - 2:28:32)

Because that is their language. That's right. And so your first realization needs to...

your first interest needs to be in any situation with your child, okay, there's the external

situation, there's what the child is doing, or is not doing, but should be doing, or screaming, or whatever it is, or not eating, not wanting to go to bed, whatever children do. But your first interest needs to be, okay, what's my inner state right now? Am I accepting this moment, no matter what form it is?

Am I saying that's... what I suggest is the little mantra that I recommend, is to ask yourself whether you can be there as the space for whatever your daughter does. Can I be the space for this?

This is a general thing that many people will find helpful, no matter what situation you go into in life, at work, at home, wherever. The present moment, am I able to accept this moment as it is, or am I saying, this should be different, you should behave differently, but she's not behaving differently, she's behaving the way she's behaving right now. You need to accept that right now, she's screaming, if that's what she does, there it is.

Can I be the space for that? And then you see her screaming. Another, this is related to the little exercise we had earlier, where you felt yourself becoming transparent to an irritating external situation, so that you don't have a reactive barrier inside you.

[Speaker 2] (2:28:32 - 2:29:00)

That's hard to do though, when your child is screaming, because your immediate instinct, I would think, is to stop the child from screaming, to resist the screaming, to try to prevent more screaming, and so the resistance of that, the angst and the anxiety of that, creates more screaming. Because if you could just be calm enough to allow your calmness to then calm the child, that's easier said than done.

[Speaker 1] (2:29:00 - 2:29:53)

Yes, that's your spiritual practice, you don't need any other spiritual practice for the next few years. It's far better than going to a monastery and meditate all day long. It's much more effective making that into your spiritual practice, and then you will see as you become more peaceful and more accepting of the present moment, more being the space, then that will transmit itself to the child and affect the child, and the child will absorb your emanation, your energetic vibrational frequency, and the change will happen in that way, rather than feeling that I need to change her. The change happens when you change.

[Speaker 2] (2:29:53 - 2:30:08)

Yeah, that is to prevent her, but that is to not allow her to do things that are dangerous, or to, you know, he's not saying that, but he's saying about adjusting the way you are being, capital B, with her. Yes. Capital B.

Yes. Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (2:30:09 - 2:30:13)

Thank you so much, and thank you so much for doing this web seminar. I hope you do more.

[Speaker 2] (2:30:13 - 2:30:25)

Well, thank you. Thank you so much. It's a way of being present for any situation, and what you were saying is we can apply it not just to children, but to all situations.

[Speaker 1] (2:30:25 - 2:31:44)

Any situation, and it's usually the case the most, in some people's lives, they have a variety of little challenges, but there's other people who have one predominant difficulty in their lives, whether it's another person, whether it's a health situation, or whether it's a work situation, or a financial problem, they have one huge challenge in their lives, and usually one would consider this huge challenge in your life as your greatest enemy, almost, the greatest burden, or as Christians would call it, my cross.

To bear. To bear. Yeah.

Now, this can actually be turned around, and you can make that very thing that is considered your great... Your cross to bear. You can make that into your greatest help on the spiritual path, because it's precisely there that you can, if you can bring acceptance to that, and be the space for that situation, that is usually called, would usually be called bad by the mind, but it is.

You can't argue with that. This is the situation right now. Can I be the space for that?

Then that situation takes you into surrender and into presence.

[Speaker 2] (2:31:44 - 2:32:26)

So that, you know, so many people, when they were first talking about purchasing this book on the website, I saw a lot of messages from people saying, I hope this, you know, shows me my life purpose. I want to awaken to my life's purpose, and for a lot of people, they want that to be something grand. They want it to be, you know, saving starving children in India and Africa.

They want it to be some, you know, great description or something, but what you're saying is, is that if we allow ourselves to be fully present with whatever our chosen function is in life, and whatever difficulties might arise, that there is sacredness in the difficulty.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:26 - 2:32:26)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:26 - 2:32:27)

If we allow it to be.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:28 - 2:32:45)

Yes, and be fully present with whatever it, the situation is now. Yes. And then go from there.

So, because then your inner self changes, when you're fully present with the situation, you're no longer putting up internal resistance to life.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:45 - 2:32:54)

Even if there is that thing that you call, there's something that you call background happiness, there's something that happened or needs to happen, or someone who did something.

[Speaker 1] (2:32:54 - 2:32:55)

Yes, background unhappiness.

[Speaker 2] (2:32:55 - 2:33:17)

Background unhappiness. There's something that happened or needs it. He refers to that on page 114, everybody.

There's something that needs to happen in my life before I can be at peace. Something happened in the past that should not have happened. Something is happening now that should not be happening.

How do we make peace with the background unhappiness of our lives?

[Speaker 1] (2:33:17 - 2:33:51)

Yes, you recognize the background unhappiness as not a content base, but as structural. It's the structure of the egoic mind to create that. We had the same when Jenny asked her question.

Right. We had the similar thing. The guilt feelings that she had was part of the background structure of the ego.

And no matter what situation, if you haven't tackled or recognized the structure of the ego in yourself as certain thought forms that repeat themselves, no matter what situation you go into, they will come up in some new form, but basically the same

structure.

[Speaker 2] (2:33:53 - 2:34:00)

I got it. I got it. So the secret to happiness, you say, there's so many people were writing about this on the web.

[Speaker 9] (2:34:00 - 2:34:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:34:01 - 2:34:48)

The secret to happiness, everybody. Page 115. There are three words that convey the secret of the art of living, the secret of all success and happiness.

One with life being one with life is being one with now. You say you then realize that you don't live your life, but life lives you. Life is the dancer and you are the dance.

I have to tell you, I love this book, but I was like, gee, I thought life was the was the dance and I was the dancer. And there are a lot of people on on the web who are saying the same thing. Can you explain how life is the dancer and we are the dance?

Why aren't we the dancer?

[Speaker 1] (2:34:49 - 2:35:48)

You are not separate from life. So whatever any form is a dancer, life is dancing the dance of form. One could say every human being and everything that's exists is part of the dance of life.

That which moves you, the very consciousness that animates your being, that animates every cell of your body, that produces thoughts too, the very consciousness that you are is the one universal, the one life. And that permeates everything. So the entire universe is permeated by that consciousness, by life, which is another word for God.

God. I don't see God as an entity that is in a particular place somewhere, but as the essence, the intelligence, the animating life essence behind all life forms. It's the eternal.

[Speaker 2] (2:35:49 - 2:35:50)

The totality.

[Speaker 9] (2:35:50 - 2:35:50)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:35:50 - 2:36:02)

It's the totality. You see God. You're saying that God is your idea of God is the totality of the essence of all life form.

[Speaker 1] (2:36:03 - 2:36:46)

Yes. And ultimately you are not separate from that. It's the egoic mind that says my life.

The moment you say my life, you've already separated yourself from life. It's a thought. You have a thought to say, this is my life.

And then you think, oh, I can lose my life. I am not separate from life because I am life. It's only through the structure of language that you create the illusion of separation.

The dog still knows on a primordial level, the animal, the tree knows that it is one with life. So it doesn't have this fear of death and it doesn't see itself as separate from the rest of the universe.

[Speaker 2] (2:36:46 - 2:36:49)

So let me ask you the big question. You have no fear of death?

[Speaker 1] (2:36:49 - 2:37:01)

No. No. The ego has dissolved.

And so only the ego fears death. I know there is no death. You know there is no death.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:05 - 2:37:06)

Okay. Tell me how.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:06 - 2:37:09)

I have a little thing at the end of this chapter.

[Speaker 2] (2:37:09 - 2:37:16)

I know you say the incontrovertible proof of immortality. I read that and I went, okay.

[Speaker 1] (2:37:16 - 2:38:09)

I've done a little thing I did there. Usually when people talk about immortality, they use certain arguments, perhaps from physics. They say the energy gets never is destroyed.

Energy can only become transformed. So the vital energy that is your life, because energy cannot be destroyed, must survive in some form. That's often the argument for the survival of that life.

There is no death, only the form dissolves. That's one way you can approach it. But what I thought I'd do, I look at the structure of this sentence of language that says my life, or I have a life, because most people believe that they have a life.

And they also believe that they can lose their life. Now, if you look at that sentence and say, I can lose my life, then I am separate from life.

[Speaker 2] (2:38:09 - 2:38:14)

So there is no such thing as my life, you say at the end of this chapter, page 128.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:15 - 2:38:32)

Because I am life. I am not separate from life. I am an expression of the one life, a temporary expression in this form of the one timeless and formless life.

So I don't have a life because I am life, expressing itself as this form.

[Speaker 2] (2:38:32 - 2:38:59)

OPRAH WINFREY Okay. So what happens when you, two weeks ago, talked about your mother and father lying in the casket, and you realized that the life force or formlessness, that they were lying in the casket and there were these bodies, but they were not there. They were not there.

So we're not our bodies. We do know that. Everybody who's reading this book knows.

We're not our bodies. We do get that.

[Speaker 1] (2:38:59 - 2:39:37)

OLE GROSSMAN Yes. And once you can actually sense that, it's not just a belief. You can also see that you're not your body, even if you just approach it logically and see that when there's a dead body, then that being is not there anymore.

There's only the flesh and the bones. And when the being isn't there anymore, the flesh and the bones very quickly dissolve. When the animating presence isn't there anymore, all the atoms and molecules separate and go their own way, because the animating presence is not there anymore.

[Speaker 2] (2:39:38 - 2:40:40)

OPRAH WINFREY Okay. So continuing here, so there's no such thing as my life, and I don't have a life. I am life.

I and life are one. It cannot be otherwise. So how could I lose my life?

How can I lose something that I don't have in the first place? How can I lose something that I am? It is impossible.

So what is happening here is I just got it, hello, hello, hello, bing, bing, bing, bing. I got it. We are confusing the I am life force with our bodies.

We're confusing that. So when this dies and becomes the shell and dissipates and the atoms go wherever they go, back into the ground, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, we are confusing that which is the physical form, the human, we're confusing that with the being. And they are separate.

[Speaker 1] (2:40:40 - 2:41:49)

Yes. So another way, if you don't like the word life, you can say the universe. People believe that I am here, and there's the rest of the universe.

And they believe I have come into this universe. They don't know from where. I've come into this universe.

It would be more appropriate to feel that you have come out of this universe, because you are this universe experiencing itself very briefly as a human, as a human, as a human. I got that. And so it wants to do that.

I got that. It's wonderful when you realize there's more to you than a person. You are the universe expressing, expressing itself.

Yes. And experiencing as a human, as a human. And it's called Eckhart.

Yes. For a little while, for a little while. And then it goes through other experiences.

And then where do we go, Eckhart? Could you tell us that? Well, let's see what happens.

Otherwise, you take the fun out of it. If you knew the rest of your life, already the fun would be taken out of it.

[Speaker 2] (2:41:49 - 2:42:16)

Oh, okay. All right. Well, before we say goodbye, I know there's lots we did not get to in this chapter.

We could have spent, you know, two or three weeks on this one chapter. But what would you say is the essence of this chapter? The essence of this chapter?

Yeah. The role-playing chapter. What I said in the beginning, that we're humans and beings.

And in this body, trying to combine, trying to live through the two.

[Speaker 1] (2:42:17 - 2:42:51)

Yes. It's balancing the human and the being, so that you can be function in this world of form, where you have to do things and fulfill your function. At the same time, not lose yourself in that.

Be rooted in the depth of being, so that you're not lost in form. So there's a depth to you and rootedness in that stillness, that aliveness. And then from there, you function out here.

And there's always then a peace in the background. A peace in the background. No matter what's happening out there.

[Speaker 2] (2:42:51 - 2:43:02)

And most particularly, not to be attached to, defined by, the roles that we play in life and realize what they are. Just roles.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:02 - 2:43:02)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:02 - 2:43:03)

Yes. Yes.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:03 - 2:43:13)

And relinquish the role when it's not required anymore. When your children grow up, you don't need to be a mother or father. You don't need to play that role anymore.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:13 - 2:43:18)

See, so many people think that is who they are. And so when their children grow up, they don't know who they are anymore.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:19 - 2:43:23)

Yes. Can be a crisis. Or people retire.

That's right. They had identified.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:23 - 2:43:24)

And they were their job.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:24 - 2:43:26)

Yes. And then, who am I?

[Speaker 2] (2:43:26 - 2:43:29)

Yeah, you were talking about in Japan, where it used to be, you kept your job for life.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:29 - 2:43:30)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:30 - 2:43:34)

And you were sharing with us the last time about a man who committed suicide.

[Speaker 1] (2:43:34 - 2:43:42)

There's been many cases of people in Japan who lost their jobs and committed suicide, because they were so identified. Their company was their sense of self.

[Speaker 2] (2:43:44 - 2:45:12)

Well, fascinating. I want to thank all of you around the world for making this really a remarkable experience, for making it possible. Eckhart and I will be here again next Monday at 8 p.m. Tell all your friends. Share the book with them. If they say, I don't get it, that's OK. That's really OK.

That's OK. They'll have the book and maybe pick it up a year from now, two years from now, 10 years from now. This fourth class will be available on demand starting tomorrow, just like all the other classes, for free here at Oprah.com.

And if you want to download a podcast of any of our classes, you can also do that tomorrow at Oprah.com and at iTunes. Your homework assignment for this week is to update your workbook. Next week, it's the chapter many of you have been waiting for, Chapter 5, The Pain Body.

The Pain Body. If you feel burdened by your past, begin to learn how to lighten that load. That's going to be really very exciting.

Now, many of you have been asking about our new Earth theme music. The song is called We Are One Earth, and it was produced by Harpo Sounds, our in-house music label. Beginning tomorrow, it will be available as a free download on iTunes at Oprah.com.

So enjoy it, those of you who've asked us for it. This was fun. This was fun.

And so let's just wait to see what happens. Let's just wait to see what happens. Thank you so much.

See you in class next week. Bye, everybody.